Storytelling: Global Reflections on Narrative

At the Interface/Probing the Boundaries

VOLUME 122

Storytelling: Global Reflections on Narrative

Edited by

Tracy Ann Hayes
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Acknowledgements

This book has emerged from a gathering, of people from across the globe, for a conference in Oxford in the summer of 2016. We came together with the purpose of telling our stories and reflecting on the use of narrative. We would like to acknowledge the organisation *Inter-Disciplinary.Net* (1999–2016) and the facilitators of the conference, Gavin and Susan Fairbairn, for bringing us together and for facilitating such an inspiring event. The memories and friendships made there will last a lifetime.

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A special thank you goes to the young artist who designed the front cover: Lauren Larmour is an art school graduate and newly qualified teacher who has creatively interpreted the contents of this book in her unique style.

As editor-in-chief for this book, Tracy Ann Hayes, I would like to offer a personal and heartfelt thank you to my co-editors, Theresa Edlmann and Laurinda Brown, who so kindly agreed to join me on this venture. I thank you for your patience, commitment to the book and above all for your honesty. You have been a joy to work with.

Tracy Hayes, Theresa Edlmann and Laurinda Brown

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INTRODUCTION

Storytelling: Global Reflections on Narrative

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Theresa Edlmann, Tracy Ann Hayes and Laurinda Brown

This volume comprises a collection of chapters developed from papers that were first presented in 2016 at the ninth global storytelling conference run by *Interdisciplinary.net*. For this conference, the focus was on the universal and ubiquitous nature of stories and narrative in human life, articulated from the outset in the call for abstracts sent out prior to the conference:

> Earlier meetings of the *Storytelling: global reflections on narrative* project have brought together participants with both personal and professional interests in the unique role that storytelling plays throughout our lives. We have been challenged by philosophers, literary theorists, artists, psychologists, playwrights, storytellers, film makers, historians, teachers, psychotherapists, nurses and many others, into reflecting on the place that story plays in our lives and the ways in which we consciously and unconsciously employ it. We have also been engaged, entertained and challenged by traditional storytellers from Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, the Philippines, India and elsewhere as well as by theatrical and musical performances, digital stories, films and performance art.
>
> For our ninth global meeting, we invite participants to continue to reflect on and celebrate story in challenging ways. Human life is conducted through story, because the telling of stories comes naturally to us. Almost every time we speak we engage in storytelling, and sharing stories is arguably the most important way we have of communicating with others about who we are and what we believe; about what we are doing and have done; about our hopes and fears; about what we value and what we don't. We make sense of our lives by telling stories about them; and we learn about other people by listening to the stories they tell. Sometimes, under the influence of the culture in which we are immersed, we live our lives in ways that try to create the stories we want to be able to tell about them.
>
> The importance of the stories we tell and the stories we hear is recognized in every culture. The work of many professions, including medicine, nursing, teaching, the law, psychotherapy and counselling, involves

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> a great deal of time listening to and communicating through stories. Story is a powerful tool for teachers, because by telling stories they can help students to integrate what they are learning with what they already know, by placing what they learn in a context that makes it easy to recall. Story also plays an important role in academic disciplines like philosophy, theology, anthropology, archaeology and history as well as literature. Narrative methods for the collection of data are increasingly used in research in the social sciences and humanities, where the value of getting to know people in a more intimate and less distant way, almost as if we are getting to know them from the inside, is increasingly valued and academics in many disciplines have begun to realise the value of storytelling as a model for academic writing.

Delegates were invited to consider presenting papers on a range of themes:

> Story as a pedagogical and research tool in academic disciplines such as history; anthropology, psychology, theology, cultural theory, medicine, law, philosophy, education, the physical sciences and archaeology.
>
> Narrative and the gathering of stories of lived experience, as a research approach in any area of professional and public life, including academic disciplines such as those listed above.
>
> The place of story and storytelling in the practice of journalism; conflict resolution; architecture; religion; tourism; politics and the law; clinical contexts such as medicine, psychotherapy, nursing and counselling; personal relations; and advertising.
>
> Story's place in culture, including theatre; cinema; music, including opera; folk music and popular music; literature, including poetry; short stories; and graphic novels.
>
> The place of storytelling in the digital age, including digital storytelling; forms of storytelling in social media; and computer gaming.

Delegates responded enthusiastically to this invitation, providing an eclectic and diverse range of personal, academic, artistic and practical contributions, which resulted in a vibrant and dynamic conference. The people who gathered in this iconic, historic and quintessential space came from across the globe, bringing their experiences, scholarly engagements and insights to bear on the themes of the conference. The days were spent developing friendships, sharing stories, watching films and witnessing visual presentations of a vast array of scholarship and endeavour. Being mid-summer, delegates were able to make the most of Oxford's delights in the evenings, wandering through the water meadow; strolling along the river; and enjoying the local pubs.

The centrality of storytelling to human life was evident in all these interactions. The geographical diversity of delegates, from as far afield as New Zealand/Aotearoa, Australia, India, Japan, South Africa, the United States and Brazil, provided uniquely wide and deep manifestations of the way in which stories shape the narratives and discourses of people's own lives and work, as well as those of their families and broader social networks. From making sense of history; to engaging in documenting biographies and current pedagogical approaches; to exploring current and emerging spatial and media trends; presenters brought stories of their own innovative ways of using stories as theoretical scaffolding across numerous disciplines.

As tends to happen in such a diverse field, the term narrative was used rather loosely. In several papers, it became an over-arching concept for work and research that encompassed individual to communal storytelling. For others, the concept of narrative became a way of tracking trends and conceptual threads through many stories told over time and space; a way of creating an archive of power dynamics, identity issues and artistic endeavour that might otherwise have remained hidden or latent. While yet others used narrative as a theoretical or conceptual framework within which stories gain particular kinds of texture and nuance within a genre of literature, a pedagogical process or a design project.

What reverberated through all the papers at the conference is the centrality of stories as a creative and reflexive means to make sense of people's past, current realities and future possibilities. As we have worked as a collaborative to bring together the chapters in this edited collection, this has continued. The chapters in this volume are revised, and, in some cases, extended versions of the majority of papers that were presented at the conference. The editors were delegates at the conference and have undertaken their editorial role in a voluntary capacity. The spirit of support from contributing authors and the publishers has made the task far easier than it could have been and has offered us the opportunity to continue and extend the conversations that began in Oxford. Chapters have been clustered around a series of themes. Although this distinction may appear arbitrary, as there are many thematic intersections and overlaps, we hope the reader will find this a useful approach to engaging with the topics in a more nuanced and focused way. Some chapters are more academic, technical and/or theoretical, whilst others are more practical and philosophical. As a result, some chapters have more/less references, with a mix of formal/informal writing styles. This is one of the strengths of the book as it ensures that there is something for everyone, across a broad audience, with differing interests and methodological preferences. All the chapters are united by the threads of narrative, demonstrated in the concluding chapter of this book.

After this Introduction, each section has its own introductory summary by the editor whose expertise most closely related to a particular theme:

Part 1 focuses on *Pedagogical perspectives* with the subthemes of learning and pedagogy. This section has six chapters introduced and edited by Laurinda Brown.

Part 2 focuses on *Media perspectives* with the subthemes of arts, technology and digital media. The section has five chapters introduced and edited by Laurinda Brown.

Part 3 focuses on *Healing perspectives* with the subthemes of love, conflict and health. This section has five chapters introduced and edited by Theresa Edlmann.

Part 4 focuses on *Cultural perspectives* with the subthemes of place, family and belonging. This section has five chapters introduced and edited by Theresa Edlmann.

Part 5 focuses on *Biographical perspectives* with the subthemes of identity and life-history. This section has five chapters introduced and edited by Tracy Ann Hayes.

Part 6 focuses on *Historical and spatial perspectives* with the subthemes of time, space and boundary-crossing. This section has five chapters introduced and edited by Tracy Ann Hayes.

And, finally, the *Conclusion* focuses on looking towards the future and continuing the conversations.

PART 1

Pedagogical Perspectives

Introduction to Part 1

Laurinda Brown

The opening section of this book, comprising six chapters, focuses on a range of perspectives related to teaching and learning. Two main strands are, firstly, the perspectives of teachers and learners, both in schools and in higher education (Brown & Lozano; Eagle; Hastings); and, secondly, the perspectives of researchers, who teach both about their findings and about methodologies for using approaches related to story in their studies (Jobb; Wong; Dantas).

It was more or less difficult to place each chapter in one or other of the two categories. Of course, the distinctions we make are part of our personal stories and my background, as a school teacher of mathematics and latterly, a university teacher of mathematics education, places the first category focused on teachers and the second on researchers sharing story-related methodologies. Nevertheless, Wong's Chapter 5 straddles both camps, illuminating methods of teaching history, which could place it in the first category, through a detailed and powerful study of oral history of, in this case, fishermen in Hong Kong, which has placed the chapter in the second category. Wong shares the methodology of using university students as storytellers who each find a thread of meaning relating some of the short scripts from interviews that formed the data for the project.

As researchers, the way we tell about our work to teach others of our findings is strengthened through both the use of stories and the use of techniques of storytelling. Jobb (Chapter 1) opens Part 1 of this book by advocating for "bringing true stories to life in the same way that fiction writers draw readers into a world of make-believe" and explores techniques for doing so. He is an award-winning author so this is not simply a theoretical chapter. The first part of this book closes with Dantas's (Chapter 6), "Storytelling as a research tool in a user-centred design process". Here is a paradigmatic shift in higher education teaching from design being focused on "formal or technical aspects" to considering an interplay between technical aspects and user-needs discovered through interviews. Three case studies, from the reports of studies carried out by students in the department, illustrate that, in each case, assumptions held by the researchers about what might constitute a good design were not confirmed.

As teachers, storytelling can be at the heart of what we practice for ourselves, as described by Brown and Lozano (Chapter 2) both: in terms of a school teacher, a research participant who, in a narrative interview that allows

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Brown to tell stories of stories of lived experience, comments, "I like to give things a story" as a way of teaching mathematics; and, also, as a description of her higher education teaching practice, by Lozano, who uses stories from her own life when teaching courses on such topics as phenomenology; sharing stories of experience is a powerful way of learning as is illustrated by student evaluations.

The power of sharing stories of experience is further illustrated in Eagle's paper (Chapter 3). Through stories of learning mathematics, language and music as a child, Eagle shows how she sees systems of patterns, "combining and transforming them", on her journey to becoming a university lecturer and researcher "learning to see learning as *play*". Hastings (in Chapter 4) advocates "engaged interactive storytelling" in schools as "an important means of nurturing [...] aspects of self-development".

The stories from lived experience, seeing patterns brought to life through writing or oral history, if listened to carefully and heard, allow us to learn and play in new worlds, getting rid of our previously fixed conceptions and opening up to developing ourselves, as a phenomenologist, as a user-centred designer, as a learner of mathematics or history and as a reader of this book.

CHAPTER 1

Telling True Stories: Creative Approaches to Bringing Nonfiction to Life

Dean Jobb

Abstract

Character. Scene. Dialogue. Setting. The novelist's tools are the building-blocks of vivid storytelling; the essential ingredients of the best nonfiction narratives, bringing true stories to life in the same way that fiction writers draw readers into a world of make-believe. This chapter identifies and explores techniques that historians, social scientists and other scholars can use to improve their storytelling skills, offering nonfiction writers innovative ways to engage readers, expanding the audience for their work. Excerpts from the bestselling books of writers such as Erik Larson (*The devil in the white city*); David McCullough (*The Wright brothers*); Kate Colquhoun (*Did she kill him?*); and Simon Winchester (*The professor and the madman*) are used to demonstrate how these storytellers breathe life into events, past and present. I also draw on my own experience as a writing instructor and as the author of six books of creative nonfiction; my latest, *Empire of deception*, recreates the exploits of a master swindler in 1920s Chicago. The best nonfiction reads like fiction while remaining true to the factual record, without embellishment or distortion. Writers of all disciplines can emulate the way these writers create memorable characters, employ dialogue, describe scenes and recreate a time and place.

Keywords

Storytelling – nonfiction – research – writing – characters – scenes – using dialogue – describing settings

• • •

1 Bringing Stories to Life

After months of waiting, Florence Maybrick was about to learn her fate. Writer Kate Colquhoun sets the scene:

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> Five feet, three inches tall, alabaster pale beneath a fine black veil, the slender young widow has never seemed more fragile as she emerges into the open body of a packed courtroom. Turning through a hip-height gate to her right she enters the dock, taking her seat once again towards the railings at its front. Her small hands rest deliberately in her lap. Two female prison guards are close behind, one on either side.
>
> She woke at dawn and it is now almost ten to four in the afternoon…. She straightens her back in the chair, feels the bare board beneath her feet, tries to raise her chin.
>
> It is time. (2014, pp. 3–4)

The tension in the courtroom is palpable as Maybrick braces for the jury's verdict; will she be convicted of murdering her wealthy husband with arsenic, or will she be found not guilty and freed? The scene reads like fiction, but it is the product of meticulous research into one of the most sensational murder cases of the Victorian era. For *Did she kill him?*, her definitive account of the Maybrick case, Colquhoun scoured court records, newspaper reports, and government documents to tell the story in dramatic, and accurate, detail. In an author's note, Colquhoun assures readers she has "stuck rigorously to contemporary sources" in constructing her narrative, yet "the reconstruction of history inevitably remains to some extent a work of imagination" (2014, p. 1).

This is the essence of narrative nonfiction; a well-told story that remains faithful to the factual record; a true account that is as engrossing as the best fiction. "I imagine, but I do not invent", explains Canadian author Charlotte Gray, whose popular histories include a biography of Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, "I speculate and I interpret, based on empirical evidence and knowledge of common practice and human behaviour". She strives "to squeeze the juice out of the dramatic possibilities" she has uncovered during her research:

> I want my readers to be engrossed, not just engaged. I hope that they will lose their sense of distance from the past, so that dates dissolve and their concern for my characters is so complete that they anxiously await the outcome as if it mattered still. (Gray, web-address)

All writers of nonfiction, including academic historians, social scientists and other researchers and scholars, can bring this storytelling approach to their work. They can present intriguing, fully formed characters who will capture the interest of readers. They can describe places and events in vivid detail. They can recreate scenes and dialogue that capture the drama of moments lost in time. And they can accomplish this without inventing or distorting the facts.

This chapter examines some of the techniques of Kate Colquhoun, Erik Larson, Simon Winchester and other authors who write for a general audience, exploring how nonfiction writers can use these tools to improve their writing, engage readers and expand the audience for their work.

2 Character

In *The Wright brothers*, David McCullough uses a single photograph to introduce the personalities of America's pioneering aviators. It was taken as they posed on the porch steps of their home in Dayton, Ohio in 1909. Wilbur, the older of the two, is distant and dour, looking away from the camera "as though his mind were on other things", McCullough writes, "which most likely it was". It is clear he would rather be in his workshop, inventing something. Orville, who ventures a slight smile and looks relaxed, is the more approachable and outgoing of the pair. What is most remarkable about the image, however, is that the renowned brothers, who built and flew the first powered aircraft, had agreed to be photographed. "Neither liked having his picture taken", McCullough notes, "[b]ut what is most uncharacteristic about the pose is that they sit doing nothing" (2015, pp. 5–6). The brothers were tireless workers, forever tinkering with their flying machines. Their work ethic was one of the keys to their success.

Erik Larson, in his bestseller *The devil in the white city*, illuminated the character of Herman Mudgett, who went by the name H.H. Holmes, the serial killer who preyed on women drawn to Chicago for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition:

> He walked with confidence and dressed well, conjuring an impression of wealth and achievement. He was twenty-six years old. His height was five feet, eight inches; he weighed only 155 pounds. He had dark hair and striking blue eyes, once likened to the eyes of a Mesmerist. "The eyes are very big and wide open", a physician named John L. Capen later observed.... Overall, Capen noted, "he is made on a very delicate mold".
>
> To women as yet unaware of his private obsessions, it was an appealing delicacy. He broke prevailing rules of casual intimacy: He stood too close, stared too hard, touched too much and long. And women adored him for it. (2004, pp. 35–36)

"Much nonfiction", American writing coach Jack Hart has noted, "is filled with ghosts ... shadows that reveal only the faintest outline of a complete human being" (2011, p. 75). Using vivid, well-chosen description and insights gained from deep research, writers can bring their central characters to life.

3 Scene

Scenes draw readers into a story while injecting drama and emotion into the narrative. The best scenes, Hart notes, create a stage where the action can unfold and propel the story toward its climax and resolution (Hart, 2011, p. 90; pp. 92–93). As Kate Colquhoun recreates Florence Maybrick's agonising wait for the verdict at her murder trial, the reader is caught up in the growing tension and feels her anxiety as she sits in the prisoner's dock. The effect is akin to watching a filmed recreation, which was the author's intention.

Simon Winchester's *The professor and the madman* opens with a scene that goes to the heart of the book, the first encounter between the title characters. "The most remarkable conversation in modern literary history", as Winchester describes it, occurred in 1896 when James Murray, editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, travelled to the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum to meet Doctor W.C. Minor, who contributed thousands of word-usage examples to Murray's ambitious project. The editor is escorted to the office of the asylum's governor, assuming that Minor is the man in charge or a member of the medical staff. Only then do Murray and the reader discover that Minor has been an inmate of the asylum for more than twenty years. "He is our longest-staying resident" (1998, pp. ix-xi), Murray is told, a murderer committed to Broadmoor after the courts ruled he was insane.

Here is how David McCullough narrates the pivotal scene in *The Wright brothers* of the first powered flight on a beach at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in December 1903, with Orville Wright at the controls and his brother running alongside for the take-off:

> The day was freezing cold. Skims of ice covered several nearby ponds. A gusty wind was blowing hard out of the north….
>
> At exactly 10:35, Orville slipped the rope restraining the Flyer and it headed forward, but not very fast, because of the fierce headwind, and Wilbur, his left hand on the wing, had no trouble keeping up….
>
> The course of the flight, in Orville's words, was "extremely erratic". The Flyer rose, dipped down, rose again, bounced and dipped again like a bucking bronco when one wing struck the sand. The distance flown had been 120 feet, less than half the length of a football field. The total time airborne was approximately 12 seconds. (2015, pp. 104–105)

These writers look for key events and dramatic moments in their stories, then undertake the additional research needed to recreate these episodes. Who were the people involved and how did they describe the incident or react to it?

Was the event newsworthy enough to receive newspaper coverage, or did others record what occurred in a letter or memoir? Where did the scene unfold and how was this room or building or location described at the time? What was the weather that day? Newspaper archives will reveal the forecast as well as accounts of other events that occurred that day, which will help to place the scene in its historical context. In telling present-day stories, of course, writers have an advantage when selecting and reconstructing scenes: they can interview the people involved and may be able to observe events as they unfold.

4 Dialogue

This is perhaps the most challenging fictional device to use in telling true stories. Novelists have the freedom to invent conversations that add narrative drive and flesh out their characters, an option not open to writers of nonfiction.

Writers tackling contemporary subjects can gather dialogue through interviews with the people involved, and may be able to record conversations as their characters interact. For historical subjects, research may yield accounts of conversations or meetings, preserved in letters, diaries, or published memoirs. Transcripts of court proceedings, if available, provide a verbatim record of questions and responses. Newspaper reports may offer detailed accounts of conversations or question-and-answer sessions, a legacy of the days when most journalists knew shorthand. This is the raw material needed to generate dialogue.

The following example is drawn from my book *Empire of deception*, which tells the story of a forgotten master of the Ponzi scheme, who defrauded hundreds of investors in 1920s Chicago. Leo Koretz claimed to control vast oilfields and millions of acres of land on the remote Bayano River in Panama. When his scam collapsed in 1923, Koretz fled to Canada but was arrested in Halifax, Nova Scotia within a year. His return to Chicago for trial received extensive press coverage, enabling me to recreate the following exchange when journalists were allowed to question the swindler for the first time:

> A platoon of reporters and photographers had trailed Leo across town and was waiting in an outer office. They were ushered in and given ten minutes to snap photographs and ask questions. Leo shook hands with the reporters he recognized and posed for photos without complaint….
>
> He twirled his eyeglasses on the forefinger of his right hand as he was machine-gunned with questions.
>
> "How did you keep out of the clutches of the law?"

> "What are your plans for defense?"
>
> Leo ignored some questions and deflected others.
>
> "Have you noticed any of your investors in the crowds here?" None appeared to have shown up at Union Station to witness his return.
>
> He smiled. The question broke the ice. "You are kind to me and them to refer to them as investors".
>
> "Well, is there anything you do want to talk about?", one of the reporters asked.
>
> He produced a cigarette and asked for a light.
>
> "Oh, I might say that matches are rather expensive in Halifax", he said, as playful for a moment as he had been when he joked about having no Bayanoes, "Two boxes for 5 cents". (Jobb, 2015, pp. 229–230)

The exchange is brief, but Koretz's stonewalling demonstrates his coolness under pressure and displays his sense of humour, even in the face of a long prison term. (In his swindling heyday, Koretz posted a novelty sign on his office wall that read, "Yes, we have no Bayano today", a play on a popular song of the time, "Yes! We have no bananas".) And while the journalists' rapid-fire questions elicit little information, they pick up the pace of the story.

5 Time and Place

The London borough of Lambeth was "a sinister place" in the 1870s, "a jumble of slums and sin that crouched, dark and ogrelike, on the bank of the Thames just across from Westminster; few respectable Londoners would even admit to venturing there", Winchester wrote in *The professor and the madman*. "Fagin, Bill Sikes, and Oliver Twist would have all seemed quite at home in Victorian Lambeth: This was Dickensian London writ large" (2013, pp. 2–3). The book begins in 1872, with a fatal shooting in Lambeth, and Winchester captures the sights and sounds, and even the smell, of this "bustling sty" of tenements and brothels so central to his story. A brewery filled the air with the "sickly" aroma of yeast and hops; trains "chuffed and snorted" on the viaducts above "a dim world of bricks and soot and screeching iron" (Winchester, 2013, p. 7; p. 9).

Erik Larson presents a similarly gritty portrait of Chicago in the waning years of the nineteenth century, in *The devil in the white city*:

> A miasma of cinder-flecked smoke blackened its streets and at times reduced visibility to the distance of a single block, especially in winter, when coal furnaces were in full roar. The ceaseless passage of trains,

> grip-cars, trolleys, carriages … produced a constant thunder that did not recede until after midnight and made the open-window nights of summer unbearable. In poor neighborhoods garbage mounded in alleys and overflowed giant trash boxes that became banquet halls for rats and bluebottle flies. Billions of flies. (2004, p. 28)

The description is detailed and vivid, transporting the reader to another time and place and resurrecting lost worlds. Larson "read – and mined – dozens of books" (2004, p. 393) about Chicago and the late Victorian period so he could recreate what it was like to be alive in that place and time. While Winchester does not identify the sources he consulted for his depiction of 1870s Lambeth, this too is clearly grounded in exacting research.

6 "Marinate your head"

These writers take a two-pronged approach to their research and writing. They zero in on materials directly related to their main characters and events; primary materials such as diaries, letters, old photographs, court files and transcripts, as well as newspaper accounts, histories, memoirs and other published works. Then they draw back, as if reversing the zoom on a camera, to capture the bigger picture; what people thought and did, and what their daily lives were like.

David McCullough immerses himself and his readers not only in his characters, but in their surroundings and their times. His advice to writers: "You've got to marinate your head, in that time and culture. You've got to become them" (n.d.). (This is as true for researching present-day subjects as it is for historical recreations. "Immersion reporting" (Hart, 2011, pp. 147–148), as it is known, is akin to anthropology; researchers watch from the sidelines and soak up the culture of their subjects and the world they inhabit. For his biography of the second president of the United States, revolutionary leader and diplomat John Adams, McCullough read or re-read the works of the great eighteenth-century writers that Adams himself had read and admired, from Swift and Addison to Fielding and Voltaire (2008, p. 654). McCullough also makes a point of following in the footsteps of his subjects, visiting the same places and travelling the same routes. "If I had been able to sail across the Atlantic in a 24-gun frigate, as John Adams did", he has explained, "I suppose I would have done that too" (p. 758).

■ Please check the unmatched open parenthesis in the sentence "You've got to become…".

Locations will have changed over time, Chicago, of course, is no longer the grimy, smoke-shrouded city it was in the 1890s, but enough buildings and

streetscapes will have survived to reward the writer who revisits the places where a story occurred. These excursions provide material that can be woven into the storytelling, bolstering historical descriptions and adding present-day sidelights. In researching *The men who united the States*, Simon Winchester cycled along a portion of the towpath of the Erie Canal, one of the many technological triumphs featured in his 2013 book. While widened and straightened since its completion in the 1820s, the canal is still "in full working order" (2013, 209–214) and remains an engineering marvel. Winchester offers a fascinating description of a pleasure boat passing through the largest lock on its 363-mile route, a process little changed since the canal opened in the 1820s.

Summary

The best nonfiction reads like fiction while remaining true to the factual record. Writers use the raw material gleaned from their research to create vivid scenes and memorable characters, to assemble dialogue and to recreate a time and place. The result is compelling prose, presented without embellishment or distortion, storytelling that will engage readers and appeal to a wide audience.

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CHAPTER 2

"I Like to Give Things a Story": One Teacher's View of Teaching Mathematics

Laurinda Brown and Maria Dolores Lozano (*Lolis*)

Abstract

In previous writing linked to the theme of *story* (*e.g.*, Brown & Coles, 2019), Laurinda has written about the use of story as a pedagogical tool in mathematics teacher education research and as a methodological tool, narrative interviewing. Using the technique of narrative interviewing, Laurinda invited individual teachers to stay with the detail of their first lesson, or sometimes first few lessons, teaching mathematics to a new group of children. The focus of the interviews was to uncover what experienced teachers do to establish their ways of working. This chapter focuses on the practices of one of the teachers who likes "to give things a story", exploring what they mean by story; what this looks like in their classroom; and the impact on student learning. Lolis's perspectives on phenomenology support the analysis of the data in a different context.

Keywords

Teaching mathematics – story as a pedagogical tool – narrative interviewing – first lessons – phenomenology – teaching practices – relevance

• • •

1 Background and Introduction

For the first global storytelling conference, Laurinda wrote a chapter with a colleague thinking about the use of stories as a pedagogical tool. In her work as a mathematics teacher educator, she uses Bateson's ideas on what a story is:

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> A story is a little knot or complex of that species of connectedness which we call *relevance*... Context and relevance must be characteristic not only of all so-called behaviour (those stories which are projected out into 'action'), but also of all those internal stories ... I offer you the notion of *context,* of *pattern through time*. (1979, 13–14)

Interviewing teachers about the first lessons of their school year with a new group of students, narratively, can give access to those "patterns through time". We take our conception of narrative interviewing (see Brown & Coles, 2019) from the work of Petitmengen. We recognise three protocols that inform our role as interviewer, described in Petitmengen's paper as follows:

1. Stabilising attention. A regular reformulation by the interviewer of what the subject has said, asking for a recheck of accuracy (often in response to a digression or judgement). Asking a question that brings the attention back to the experience.
2. Turning the attention from "what" to "how" (never "why").
3. Moving from a general representation to a singular experience. This is what we would term *story* with our prospective teachers, a re-enactment, reliving the past as if it were present. Talking out of experience, not from beliefs or judgements of what happened, often involves teachers in a move to the present tense. Staying with the detail is important, a maximal exhaustivity of description that allows access to the implicit. (adapted from, 2006, pp. 229–269)

The final protocol, number 3, is the one that is important for uncovering patterns through time that have become implicit in the actions of an experienced teacher. The technique is to look for detailed descriptions of recent experiences, staying at a level of detail of experience that we do not usually talk within, which gives access to the decision-making of the teacher as they work with a new class. This process of exploration invites the emergence of structures, which are made evident through the detail of the descriptions:

> Becoming aware of one's lived experience is not a random event, but the result of precise acts, of which a first 'sketch of a common structure' (Varela and Shear, 1999) is emerging.
>
> PETITMENGIN, 2009, p. 11

Evidencing these common structures and relationships between ways of acting in the classroom allows the possibility of ′seeing′ more and acting differently. This is what, in enactivism, is called learning.

2 Interview with a Teacher about Their First Lesson with a New Group

The focus of the interviews was to uncover what experienced teachers do at the start of the academic year to establish their way of working. One interview is used to be illustrative of the process of narrative interviewing leading to the story of teaching for one individual teacher as "giving things a story". After the transcript of the interview, the full text of which has been cut, we will analyse the text using the framework above to consider methodological issues related to narrative interviewing and what the text tells us about this teacher's use of the word "story" and the implications for classroom practice. Story is here being used in a range of contexts, relevance, a narrative at the start of a lesson given by the teacher and the process of staying with the detail of experience in narrative interviewing. In the transcript that follows, comments in square brackets give points of clarification; L stands for Laurinda, the interviewer and T stands for the teacher.

3 Excerpt 1: Beginning of Interview

L What day did you start?

T Tuesday, just after lunch, was when I first saw them [a class of 11-year-old students]. What I had in my mind as I was going in, I knew I wanted to get them posing questions and I wanted to tell them a story, but I was also nervous about telling the story because I was going to ham it up [being melodramatic] a bit.

L Had you told the story before?

T No, it was a new story, and I just thought it was the best way to introduce this piece of work. This piece of work we called *Monumental towers* and it's one of the units at transfer [the 11-year-old students have transferred from another school (primary) and bring work on problems with them (to secondary school)]. Some of them may have their work with them, some of them may not. So, I decided to tell the story again and not to tell them it was *Monumental towers* and ask them what kind of questions they could ask.

L Where does the story come from?

T I like to give things a story because I like to give the children natural language as a parallel to the mathematical language.

L So a story for you would imply basic language, not mathematical language. Any other things that you would say in the story?

T I think it [basic language] allows people to enter the world of maths you are talking to them about if you have got a story. If it's amusing or catchy in any way they might get interested, providing a short simple language with which they can converse with one another, allowing for group work, which is something else I think.
L You are walking through the door, what exactly do you do, where are the students?
T They are all lined up outside.
L Where are you? What are you doing?
T I am in my room. They are just outside the door lined up. So, I ask people to walk nicely to one side and make sure that they are not being jostled. I invite them in and they sit in groups on tables of four and six, mostly fours. They sit down and I smile and say hello to one or two people. Then I say, "Let's start", at some point. And I wait, looking sort of cheerful and eyebrows raised and expectant.

Comments on Excerpt 1:

This first phase of the interview acts to get the interviewee talking. In the first few interchanges the teacher talks in the past tense and not in detail about the lesson. There is some stabilising of attention both through repetition and asking questions from the interviewer and the idea of story, "I like to give things a story", has already emerged as important as a way of "providing a short simple language". It is at the point that the interviewer says, "You are walking through the door …" that the move, after one more exchange where more questions are asked, to the present tense happens, "I am in my room".

4 Excerpt 2: Telling the Story

T Then I start the story. I tell them I am starting the story and that they don't have to write anything down, just to listen to the story and then I'll tell you what to do next.
L Where are you standing to do that?
T Sitting on my desk, which is to the right-hand side. Imagine the chalk board at the front, my desk is in the corner of the front, tucked in the corner. I am sitting on the edge of the desk in a sort of casualish stance. Then I start to tell the story, which was, "I had a dream last night and in that dream this is what I heard: "You must build a tower and from the top

of the tower it looks like a sort of plus sign and, from the side, it should look like two staircases meeting". We [the class and the teacher] haven't decided yet how big the tower should be but when we decide, you must be able to build it and organise the building of it".

■ Please check the unmatched parenthesis in the sentence "should look like two staircases...".

■ Please check the unmatched parenthesis in the sentence "build it and organise ...".

Comments on Excerpt 2:

The interview happened as soon after the first lesson with a new group as possible, so what happened is clearly in mind and the story is told with the teacher seemingly present to the moment of that past event. Story to this teacher is not in the Bateson sense of pattern over time or relevance. Here story used in teaching is about children finding images in response to a teller of tales. In this case, the story is linking to a mathematical image. The authors of this chapter, both mathematics teacher educators, enjoyed working on images of what the tower might look like. The link to Bateson is the "pattern over time" of liking to "give things a story".

5 Excerpt 3: Variety

T Then I asked them to tell me what the dream was again. Volunteers hands went up and told me. They were very clear about the view from above and the view from the side. I asked them to make what it might be. They were given 5 minutes to make what the tower might have been.

L So, the only action from the students was a telling back to you of the original story, at which stage the invitation was for them to make it, so you were just checking that they had understood the story?

T Yes, so then they knew what they had to do, that was the idea. I did want variety.

L So why [*sic*] do you want variety?

T Because in later lessons we were going to go for posters for this [problem], well by the end of two day's work we were going to have posters and I wanted the posters to be different and I wanted people to have things to look at, which would be new for them and interesting. I wanted different people to have different problems that they would be solving, partly so they wouldn't be copying one another, partly so they would have to rely on their own thinking. And just to show that a huge range of possibilities can come out of story anyway. There is not one right answer, there are lots of answers, which are valid to various degrees.

L The background rules remain quite fixed, don't they, at some level. So, this is something to do with you trying to encourage a richness in terms

of their response, of flexibility and an awareness of lots of different approaches.

Comments on Excerpt 3:

The detail leads to ideas of this teacher's practice and images of how the students will work together after the story. There is a "why" question that is not really allowed in the protocol and the teacher does shift tense away from the present, however, it also seems to have the function of mirroring back the word "variety" for more discussion and detail, like stabilising attention in the protocol. The teacher's need for variety also encourages the students to see different towers as positive, steering them away from the need for a single "right" answer. With the introduction of the future image of "posters", there is even more of a sense of how this teacher is allowing students to experience what doing mathematics in this classroom feels like early on in their experience. This is a mathematical space in which it is alright to be not wrong but be different, as long as the result can be justified. The students are encouraged, through their posters, to present their own stories of their towers.

6 Excerpt 4: Socio-mathematical Norms of Asking Your Own Questions

T I asked them [the students] to hold them [their towers made in 5 minutes] up and compare them. I asked them, "Is that tower okay?" Some people said "Yes" or "No", mostly "Yes" though. There were a few with staircases going up and there was another one going across. Another was going up which I quite like, two triangles spliced together centrally which I hadn't thought of myself. There were a lot of other things, one more like a landing craft on the moon but they looked quite pretty and they had a staircase kind of thing. One lad had not been given the worksheet, which had gone out with the transfer activity. The transfer activity was creating uniformity, despite my best attempts to destroy it. That was okay. I then asked them individually to write down the task and the story and then in groups five minutes to decide what kind of questions or concerns or worries the architect has.

L So, you wanted them to look at the towers in the group so that they could pose their own questions.

T Some people did ask me for clarification, "Is it okay if I do this?", "Am I allowed to do that?", which I hadn't addressed. I think I said something like they could. Towards the end of the lesson we talked about organisation,

when I say, "We", I mean I started that, and I said, "What's going to be a good way to get everything tidied up and dished out again at the beginning of next lesson?". I took some suggestions and I said, "This table group this week and then we'll move round so that each table gets its responsibility".

Comments on Excerpt 4:

Early in the school year, the norms of behaviour in the classroom are being established, both within the doing of mathematics and in general classroom management. The teacher models the behaviour of asking questions ("Is that tower OK?") and builds in time for the students to pose their own questions about their models and those of others in the group. At the end of the lesson, through asking a question to the group, "What's going to be a good way to get everything tidied up … ?", the teacher also models the need for establishing norms. This teacher will not be seen as the sole mathematics authority in this classroom who is the arbiter of truth. These children are being encouraged to develop their own sense of truth within mathematics.

7 Excerpt 5: Talking About

T They knew about the purpose that, after they had done the showing of the towers to each other, we talked about them doing a poster, "If we were going to do a poster, what would we need on the poster?" Ideas were coming from different people. People were saying their names as well as their responses so I could get familiar with names. So, we talked about the kinds of thing that we might need to be making notes of.

L You happened to be talking about the sorts of things that might go on there,

T Within the format of posters, I made some suggestions. I said it could be wrapped around, it could be a solid, it could be a leaflet, it could be … Next lesson they were asking me, "Am I allowed to make it a leaflet?", still asking me.

L So, poster doesn't just mean a piece of sugar paper with some things stuck on it.

T No, but it often does conjure up that because people have to find out how to do that, but I wanted them to know that other possibilities were there.

L It's quite interesting that whenever you have to give organisational information or instructions, it appears as if you are asking questions.

T I think sometimes people like to be told, but I tend to, I prefer to ask questions and to have people answering them where possible.

Comments on Excerpt 5:

Getting into the detail exposes such assumptions by the interviewer that "poster" has the limited meaning of something drawn on a piece of sugar paper and displayed. Again, this teacher supports the students in their decision making to focus on supporting their creativity. For some students, they need to keep asking if particular possibilities such as "leaflet" are alright. Mathematics classrooms do not always encourage creativity if the focus, say, is one of practising procedures. Although the third protocol encourages any general statements to be supported with examples, there is another move illustrated here, that of the particular, the details of the experiences, leading to a move to labels such as "variety" and "difference". We call this talking about the detail in contrast to talking in generalities. A story happens once at the beginning of the lesson and "variety", "difference" and "posters" give insights into what this experienced teacher uses implicitly in many if not most lessons. This "maximal exhaustivity of description" gives rise to the "implicit".

8 Some Thoughts

In concluding this chapter, we would like to make two observations. Firstly, the narrative interviewing protocol supports the interviewee staying with the detail of practices, what actually happens in a classroom, leading to statements that give insight into patterns of practice. Those patterns of practice we would call "stories" after Bateson and, in this case, for this teacher, the use of stories is their story of their practice. This teacher is not unique in making use of stories. In a recent assignment for a Master's course, Laurinda was struck by the sentence, "Each mathematical concept is introduced with a sense of its history as a context. For example, I often start lessons with a story in an attempt to provide a sense of the relevance of the topic outside the classroom and as a hook to motivate the group". The practice referred to is telling stories from history.

The second observation, from the transcript, is that the children are experiencing a way of learning mathematics where there is no one right answer. They are being creative and the variety of their ideas is valued. This energising of students, them being present in learning mathematics, where they are not getting distracted by feelings of inadequacy or inability to do anything, can happen through their own stories, *e.g.*, their images of the towers being valued

and sharing these stories or images with each other. We end this chapter with a story from Lolis related to the teaching of a phenomenology course and how she uses stories that has parallels with telling stories from history and the way the students enjoy the experience of learning in this environment:

> I use stories often when I am teaching. Many of the stories I use are about my own life, although there are also stories which I have heard from close friends and/or family or even those that come from a documentary or movie I recently watched. I use them when we are discussing abstract concepts from theories or philosophical positions such as phenomenology or constructivism. When it is my own stories I am talking about, I describe the experience in detail, including emotions and sensations. I did not use these kinds of stories when I first started teaching and I did not deliberately plan doing so, but they have started coming to mind more and more when I teach and, as soon as they do, I share them with students. I have noticed that when I do, students' faces show that they have become more interested, they "light up" [presence], and often they then share their own stories. On two of the most recent courses I taught, this kind of story telling is what students said they appreciated most about the course. The following are some comments from the course evaluations:
>
> 1. I like the way she connects the themes to everyday life examples.
> 2. I think it's a very interesting course, I liked everything I've learned so far.
> 3. Very interesting, the way she teaches, it's stimulating and allows you to be attentive in class.
>
> I did not get these comments when I taught my first courses on methodology. One thing that is interesting to me is that I cannot think of these stories beforehand. If I try to think of an example about a certain topic or concept beforehand, I can maybe conjure something up, but it is when I am with students that the story really comes alive. When the lesson is over, I am often surprised at how my mind came up with such a story, with such a connection to the topic we had been discussing. I do not think I could have done this when I started teaching and one of the reasons might be that when I first got to know the concepts from phenomenology or enactivism, they made a lot of sense to me intellectually, they resonated with me. In time, however, there's been an exploration of these concepts from experience, and I am often, in the moment, "seeing" that this or that idea is the case for this situation I am just experiencing.

By noticing these relationships, my acting in the classroom has been different. I am learning in the enactivist sense, allowing for the possibility of bringing forth unplanned elements and trusting that these stories will be helpful.

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CHAPTER 3

Learning to Play: Stories of Learning Mathematics, Language and Music

Sarah Eagle

Abstract

This is a story about studying learning and the story of coming to be a university teacher and researcher. It is a story about language and similar enchantments, mathematics and music; about systems of patterns, producing something bigger and interesting by joining them together one after the other, combining and transforming them; and it is a story about learning to see learning as *play*.

Keywords

Language – mathematics – music – culture – patterns – learning to play – systems of patterns

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1 Language

When I was a child, I played with words. I remember hopping along beside my mother, hand in hand playing our special walking game of reciting nursery rhymes together: but not in unison. We'd take it in turn to say a line, or a word, or two words and we'd play with the way it went and the way we walked. A step for a word, a word for a step.

I distinctly remember something puzzling happening; the thing we said, for our own step, was sometimes a proper word (so, "house" was a step and a word) but sometimes it took two, three, four or more steps to make up a word ("caul", "lif", "flo", "wer").

Sometimes, one part of a word was another word ("cab", "bage") but the word inside the word ("cab") did not have much to do with the meaning of the

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enclosing word. Sometimes, a word was made up of more than one word ("rail", "way") and each had something to do with the bigger word, helping you to understand it and you could play with it (What happens to the meaning when you say "wayrail"? Does it stay the same? Why not?)

I remember copying the words on the fronts of the packets whose contents I knew. I copied the letters from the milk packet, carried the paper into the next room and gave it to my mother. She looked at it and said "milk". The delight of moving the word from the object and having someone read it off another object is still with me; that moment of discovery of what writing meant and what it could do.

2 Mathematics

When I began school, my friends and I were given coloured rods to use for learning numbers. Amongst the set of rods were small cubes, like dice, but without any dots. I enjoyed making patterns by grouping cubes and rods alongside one another. I thought the small cubes were useful because they always fitted into the gaps. If I made a line with the smallest cubes on the long side of the longest rod and then counted them, the number I got to was ten. I already knew that ten was a significant number because when I was counting with other people, we always said "Ten!" in an excited way when we got to it. I was the number we got to after doing counting with all of one person's fingers and thumbs.

3 Music

When I began learning music, I learned that one of the white keys on the piano (which was called a note) was called middle C. I was shown how the sequence of notes repeated itself, in something called octaves. Octaves means that every eighth note has the same name, and oct is also in octopus, which has eight legs. But there are only seven names of notes (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) and the black ones in between have names that change according to whether you are going right (which is called up) or left (which is called down); sharps and flats. There are only seven letter names, but because there are also five of these sharps/flats, there are actually twelve notes inside every octave.

The lack of correspondence with the idea of eight was not limited to music, because as well as octaves and octopus, there is a month that begins with *oct*, but it is not the eighth month. It got worse when I looked at the way music was written down, because instead of using letters there are dots on lines, but there

are only five lines, with four spaces between them, which add up to nine, not eight.

The world seemed to be characterised by patterns that you could explore by stretching and extending what was already there. But then asking people why some patterns that seemed as though they would be there weren't, usually led to a mystified response rather than an answer.

When I listened to what happened as I learned to play music, the struggle to understand came to an end. Once I stopped worrying about the failure to find the correspondences I expected and learned how to use my hands on the piano and how to read the system of notation, it became possible to start bringing the music that other people had written into the present; then, as my competence grew, to make it something that expressed a feeling, or an experience, or a wish, or even something that said something. And what it said was different from words; it wasn't about something, it was simply saying.

4 Culture

When I was a grown up, I played with ideas. I found myself watching my own child making sense of the world. I was curious about storybooks and computer games in the new world that that he and other children were growing up in. What were they learning? How did these contemporary things help them learn? Twenty years earlier, I had been at university, studying patterns: experimental methods connected with theories of learning; patterns of behaviour in pigeons and rats; patterns of young children's behaviour with objects and with words (*e.g.*, Goswami, 2000). I supposed that by now there would be more research that would help me understand learning. I started reading, went back to university, embarked on a thesis that was going to be about young children's learning, and how a thing of some sort or another might be designed to help them learn.

As I read, I talked to other parents about what they and their children did with computers, watching them doing things together. One of the books I read (Rogoff, 1990) made the point that amongst the patterns that characterise the culture that I live in, parents congratulate their children when they do things that our culture values and counts as learning. Meanwhile, there are lots of other things that children learn without any particular attention being drawn to it. This rang true.

In my conversations with families, I noticed that parents felt their children could learn something useful when they were using the computer. They expressed a hope that through the computer their children would gain knowledge of the alphabet and numbers before they started school. When I watched parents and children using computers and other devices together, I

could hear many instances of "Well done" and other congratulations on what a child had done.

I kept thinking about the idea that we value certain kinds of knowledge and pay attention to it, congratulating and encouraging children to display that they know it, while other learning and ways of knowing go on all the time, without attention being drawn.

5 Learning to Play

The way I thought about learning began to shift. I looked back at my own experiences, the games with words and walking; my playing with patterns about numbers; my discovery that a written word meant the same thing whether it was on the milk packet or on a piece of paper; and my continued exploration of how far patterns went and how you might find out whether they had limits and where. I started to see my own urge to write the thesis as part of this pattern of looking for patterns. What I now saw was that I had set out looking for academic knowledge of learning, a knowledge that extended from the experimental methods that I had studied during my degree, of relationships between specific experiences and learning; experiences of actions and rewards; and of demonstrating learning and being congratulated for it.

But my stories about looking for patterns and, in so doing, learning language, mathematics and music are about *learning to play*. They are about shared experience, about doing things with other people and about the pleasure of communication; the warmth of my walking game with my mother, sharing her own enjoyment of pattern; joining in with others in using "Ten!" as a significant word (Walkerdine, 1988), a way of ending a sequence that connects to fingers and toes, and for starting with when launching rockets to the moon. My stories show me why learning to play the piano was never really about being able to show that I knew how to put my fingers on the right keys at the right time. Why, when I could play music from a paper score, what I played was a kind of voice from myself, but also from the person who had written it, saying something, without words. Through playing with the patterns of my stories, I have come to see my own thesis as a weaving of my own voice with that of others, as the outcome of time spent playing with the regularities and the disjunctions that I noticed. I begin to see my work as a teacher as learning how to play with fellow learners. The things we play with are patterns; the patterns we see in our own experience; all the different ways we might find to describe them; and what we notice as we bring our own patterns together with other people's stories and writings. What we are learning are the new patterns that emerge for us as we play.

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CHAPTER 4

"Where Are You Going? Where Have You Been?": Foundations and Methods for Revitalising Story Reading for Children

Phyllis Hastings

Abstract

I examine the need for self-building throughout the educational process and see interactive engaged story-reading as a basis for this development, with both content and method based on these, often invisible, dimensions of growth. The first section deals with the development of selfhood, looking at the essential self (identity); the self in relation to others (empathy); and the self in the world (engagement and responsibility). It also looks at important aspects of the person's actions in the world, including value development; emotional awareness; and imaginative thinking. All of these are considered to be foundations of growth, which in the past were seen to be the responsibility of a broad village. Today, given the severe limitations of this village in terms of child-raising, schools must consciously see themselves as playing a role in development of the selfhood of children and youth. The second section considers how engaged interactive storytelling can become an important means of nurturing these aspects of self-development. It examines the teacher's role in the process as it differs from traditional images. It transforms Scholes's three stages of the reading-responding process by including experiential as well as analytical responses as the story-listeners make sense of the literary work.

Keywords

Interactive storytelling – identity – empathy – social responsibility – emotional awareness – personal values – imaginative thinking

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1 Introduction

When I wonder why my college general education students struggle, or don't, with the task of interpreting stories, I use the title of a Joyce Carol Oates's (2013) story, *Where are you going? Where have you been?*, to guide my reflection. Many students come from homes with little story-reading and from standardised, test-oriented classes, which intellectualise learning-to-read literature, moving up reading levels and require the finding of right answers. Students' college goals relate to acquiring a degree rather than an education and getting a job rather than living a satisfying, meaningful life. Stories do not fit.

■ Reference "Carol Oates's (2013)" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

It takes a village to raise a child. Unfortunately, for many children today, the only village dedicated to raising them in a conscious, consistent way is their school, particularly its teachers. When involvement of family or community organisations diminishes or disappears and as the school becomes overwhelmed by demands to produce good test scorers, the school must play all the multiple roles of the community, in nourishing: character as well as knowledge; wisdom as well as skills; self-understanding and self-confidence as well as evidence of learning.

Children and adolescents need adults in various situations playing various roles to provide challenges, feedback and support. I found these roles as a child through a mother doing housework when I came home from school; piano lessons and recitals; girl scouts and state fair entries; play with friends in the neighbourhood; Sunday school classes and church youth groups; church picnics with games; school and church choirs; and baby-sitting jobs. Leadership, competitions, practice and then performance, group work and even employment contributed to my discovery of who I was and could be.

I am not suggesting here a set of lessons to be added to STEM-plus-reading in the curriculum; no benchmarks or monitoring or rating the results. Instead, I recommend using development of selfhood, as described here, as focal points for considering not only content of curriculum but also pedagogy, classroom management and activities beyond the assigned test-directed tasks. These principles can also be the basis for advocacy, so that resistance to such demands as use of high-stakes testing to evaluate teachers and schools is shown to be rooted in important goals rather than, as is often implied, teachers' unwillingness to do their jobs.

The next section points to three facets of selfhood, one's identity. First is the essential personality one was born with. Second is associations and interactions with others. Third is the person's connection with the larger world. These are considered as ways a person's sense of self and ways of relating to others develop during their lifetime: building a set of personal values to live by;

dealing with emotional drives; and developing and using imaginative thinking. Following this, a section looks at engaged interactive storytelling as an important site for this process of nurturing selfhood. Present reformists consider "learning-to-read literature" to be an important part of the school's agenda, but they focus primarily on discovering ideas and analysing elements of craft, dealing with stories analytically rather than experientially, similar to non-fiction. I propose a different approach to reading stories, namely engaged interactive story reading for self-building and meaning-creation, encouraging rather than eliminating personal responses and connections to the reader's life.

2 Nurturing Strong Selfhood

2.1 *The Essential Self: Developing Identity, Authenticity and Agency*

I am who I am. I am important. I can grow and learn and do important things.

One is born with a unique set of traits, with potential and limits, opening up possibilities but creating barriers.[1] A healthy self learns how to develop and enhance these, to use them but to live within their limits. Essential to this development are self-acceptance and self-respect. Goals are confidence but not to the point of arrogance; humility but not to the point of self-degradation; persistence but not to the point of quixotic stubbornness; and goal-direction but resilience when obstacles cannot be overcome. It is important for those guiding children's growth to realise that the essential self is dynamic, not static, always in process of being developed. The changes, though they may be strongly affected by situations, by events, or by the actions, words or demands of others, are always in the hands of the persons themselves.

For children and youth, the key to maintaining and developing their sense of self is their self-image, the way they understand themselves, project an image toward others, and respond when others contradict the image they hold. However, schools are now being forced to reject uniqueness, in the US, in order to standardise learning and to rate and rank students, teachers and schools according to a limited range of criteria. Especially when under-resourced, schools give little opportunity for students to choose their own paths and evaluate the results for themselves.

2.2 *The Self with Others: Developing Empathy and Effective Interaction*

I am needed. I am supported.

1 For a discussion of the concept of "true self" see how Palmer (2000) uses it in his discussion of vocation.

From infancy we continually expand the range of our relationships based on what we need and desire and what others want and expect from us. Contacts range in level of intimacy and depth of interaction from committed or covenant relationships within families and close friendships to one-time contacts in business transactions. They range in level of power from those in authority, say, police and teachers, to those whose actions we supervise and control, with many in between. We learn to play myriad roles for our own well-being and satisfaction and for our emotional and economic survival. As children, we all learned, often the hard way, how and when and why to be obedient to our parents and how and when to establish our own paths and perhaps suffer the consequences. We learned how to establish friendships and the joy and pain involved in making and breaking relationships. We learned about rejection, trust and betrayal. Children need resources to help them reflect on and learn from these experiences.

Three aspects of this development are particularly important for those nurturing children and youth today. One is their ability to negotiate with others for mutual benefit. Collaboration and team-work are hard to manage but are important in employment, in family and neighbourhood relationships and in political engagement. A second important concern is their ability to determine whom to trust. As persons, as they grow and learn to ascertain their own wants and needs, so they have to look behind the words and actions of others to avoid being manipulated or hurt. Thirdly, children and youth must learn how to respond to those they care about, determining how they can be of real help, based on an understanding of what persons need, not just what they want or ask for. Tough love is harder than feel-good love. Sometimes care can just be standing with someone and refraining from offering platitudes or advice. These kinds of knowledge are never complete, always being developed based on new experiences, vicarious as well as immediate. Again, growth requires guidance and support.

Schools are limited in dealing with individual needs, as teachers work with large groups. When social workers are not available and when contact with parents is limited or non-existent, teachers' responses are based on external demands rather than needs of individuals. The roles children are invited to play in the classroom are limited, so guided practice in such things as negotiating conflict, encouraging supportive behaviour or examining harmful interaction is limited as well.

2.3 *The Self in the World: Developing Engagement and Responsibility*

I am part of a complex world and play a role in what happens to it.

Belonging to defined groups, based on geography; gender; ethnicity; sexual orientation; and social connections, provides identities used by others and

negotiated by the persons themselves. In addition, there are institutional positions that provide identity as well as opportunities for development. A person is a teacher; a lawyer; a member of a faith group; an activist; a Republican; and a Rotarian. Some of these identifications one accepts and enhances; others one refines or rejects. I spent much of my adulthood as a minister's wife, which gave me opportunities for engagement but also put me in mental boxes based on others' expectations. In being part of an institutional structure, one sometimes feels called to question its mission or its policies, perhaps with negative consequences.

Children and youth in schools seldom have opportunity to control their positioning. Family status, appearance and personality affect self-image and characterisation by others; and response to roles at school may be influenced by their treatment at home. So, they are constantly negotiating identities and roles, to challenge authority effectively or to collaborate to achieve their self-determined goals, and to create a self-image they can live with. Once more, adult support is necessary.

2.4 *Value-Building, Emotional Awareness and Imaginative Thinking*

Using this integrated view of selfhood, one must examine three aspects of the person's involvement in the world, all of which need to be nourished during childhood and adolescence. The first is development of an internal value system to define what is beneficial for oneself, for others, and for the social and cultural environments one inhabits. The second is incorporation of emotional life into the overall direction, aware of its potential harm and also its benefits. The third is imagination, looking at what is present and visible and considering and evaluating other possibilities. These are often neglected or rejected in present US approaches to schooling.

3 Storytelling for Self-Building and Meaning-Creation

3.1 *Goals of Engaged Interactive Story-Reading*

This image of growth in self-building and value development I have just described contrasts with the narrow definition of learning and regimentation embodied in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that have been developed to define education in American schools to "ensure that all students are college and career ready … no later than high school" (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 3), implying that the primary value of school is employability. It designates a series of stages, defining achievement expected in each category of each subject area at each grade level; in other words, it demands uniformity and testability. This sounds more like a manufacturing model than an image of

human growth, humans being to some extent self-determining, variable and complex. In a time in the US when families are stretched and stressed, nurturing of children is often left entirely to under-resourced schools, especially in urban areas, recovering the vitality of interactive, engaged story-reading is essential. In these models, children are invited to become immersed in stories they share with peers; to internalise the stories; to reflect on them and connect them to their lives and worlds, thus enhancing and expanding their repertoire of learning experiences.

3.2 *Teachers' Roles*

It is important that teachers or other story-readers play roles that support engagement and discovery rather than trying to lead listeners toward a predetermined end. Their purpose is not to teach but to facilitate learning.[2] They help listeners read their lives into the stories so the stories can become lenses through which participants look at their own worlds and people and lives. Their probing questions help the students see stories as raising questions rather than providing answers, offering experiences rather than representing ideas. Ideas may come from the story experiences, but only after listeners make connections between the stories they already know.

Here are some tips for story-readers:

> Choose real stories, not gimmicky ones, that raise important life issues. The guide to selection is the leader's personal response. I love Dr Seuss. He shows me a lot about life. When I find myself trying to get to Solla Sollew, "Where they *never* have troubles! At least very few" (Geisel, 1965, n.p., italics original), I find I cannot get there. Hadn't Dr Seuss warned me?

Guide discovery but do not judge results. You would like them to see it the way you do, but if they do not, they cannot or will not, yet. I recall taking our four pre-teenage children through the Black Hills and pointing out what for me

2 In *The courage to teach*, Palmer (1998) develops in great depth this alternative view of teaching. He claims that, "to teach is to create a space in which the community of truth is practiced" (p. 95). He describes the commonly held but faulty image of teaching, which he says is based on "the objectivist myth of knowing". An expert passes down knowledge of an "object" to "amateurs" (p. 100), with the flow going only one way. This image, he claims, "Falsely portrays how we know, and it has profoundly deformed the way we educate" (p. 101). In contrast, his view of "community of truth" shows a group of interconnected "knowers" all relating to a "subject" as well as to each other (p. 102); knowing the subject one knows "in and through relationship" (p. 103).

were awesome sights. No response. It was back to their comics or arguments or whatever.

Validate and integrate their responses, engage them all insofar as possible. Accept all responses as representing possibilities, weave them together and invite all into the experience as valuable members of the search team. Given the "right answer" orientation common in schools, entertaining all possibilities and keeping them on the group's table is essential.

3.3 *Probing Questions: Stages of Engagement and Reflection*

One pattern for questions is based on Scholes's (1985) book *Textual power*. He defines three stages of response to stories: reading, interpreting and critiquing. I have modified his college-level analysis to fit a broader, more experiential description of the processes. Reading is becoming engaged in the story (*reading into* it, in my version). Interpreting is filling in gaps and thematising the work (*reading out from* the story, associating it with other literary and personal experiences and thus making sense of the whole). Critiquing is testing its validity, its truth, in terms of one's life understanding (*reading against* the story).

The initial stage, reading, is engagement, getting inside the story, becoming involved, being there with the characters in the action. Questions like these can be used during the reading to invite the children in. How does the character feel? Why is he/she doing that? What does the character want? What do you think the character will do next or what will happen next? What should he/she do? What would you do? In responding at this level, students are recreating the drama of the story, responding out of their own experience and thus implicitly making connections between the story and their own lives, talking about what they already know.

Other methods can also be used to engage the listeners. They can be invited to make appropriate sounds; speak lines with voices to represent the feelings of characters; enact parts of the drama; draw pictures of characters or events; and, even create parallel stories from their own experience. Examples of second-graders' drawings and letters to characters in Shakespeare plays can be seen in a collection *Shakespeare can be fun*, particularly *Twelfth Night for kids* (Burdett & Coburn, 2011).[3]

3 Lucy Calkins and colleagues present detailed advice on how to align teaching literature with CCSS. While they claim that the result is literature owned by the readers, however, it becomes clear that the teacher is expected to have in mind the ideas and lessons that should appear. This becomes clearest when they suggest working through the assignment by talking first with colleagues. In doing so, they should avoid digressions introduced by, "This makes me think…" and stay focused on the details of the text. First, the details of the text then move to

Having experienced the story vicariously, readers/listeners engage in reflection: standing outside the story and looking in, creating interpretations. They reflect on the overall development of action and character by considering who they identified with; what characters they recognised; and how the situations were like those in which they had participated. They make thematic associations, with getting into trouble; losing something important; feeling left out; or embarrassed or lost. These are questions that could invite this reflection. What do you remember about the story? Who did you like? Dislike? Why? Where did you feel, for instance, worried, excited or angry? Was there anyone you know in the story? Who were you in the story? Did it turn out the way you thought it would or you wanted it to?

Listeners can then challenge the meaning of the story as they have experienced it, critiquing it. They consider whether the story tells the truth, not in a factual sense but in terms of what they already know about human dynamics. Is that the way life really is? Anne Sexton's (1971) poem *Cinderella* makes us look again at the fairy tale's happy ending. "Cinderella and the prince / lived, they say, happily ever after, / like two dolls in a museum case" (p. 56). What does "they say" imply about the story's truth? Is that the kind of life you want? Can "happily ever after" ever happen? These challenges are difficult for children, since they have a limited collection of life experiences to use as a basis, but planting seeds of doubt is important to keep them from spending lifetimes waiting for Prince Charming to arrive and make their lives better.

3.4 *Probing Questions: Experiential Responses*

Another set of guidelines is based on traditional literary analysis, which I have modified for college students and refined further for children's story-reading. For college students, I emphasise two kinds of responses: analytical and experiential. The first sets up the categories and the second determines the kinds of questions asked. The world (setting): What is the world of the story? How is it like your world? What are the people doing? What roles are they playing? What do they struggle with and what do they value? Are their lives like yours? Character: Who are the people in the story? Why are they doing what they are doing? How are they feeling? How would you feel? Plot: What happens and what are the results, changing people or the world? What kind of trouble are the people in? What do you think they might do? What should they do? What did they do? Did it work? Why or why not? For college students, I also include the category of narrator, since the narrative position plays an important role in

ideas, what the story is about (p. 57). Associations with personal experiences are considered irrelevant to making sense of the story.

understanding the dynamics of the story, but do not include it in discussions with children because of its complexity. It is helpful to call attention to the storyteller as commentator. These questions lead to a complex but holistic view of what the story is showing about life.

Another traditional pattern that is useful to create reflection is the insight that stories are based on one of three or four oppositions: a person against themself; against another person; against a social group or norm; or against nature. Asking what a character is fighting against encourages children, youth or college-age students to push beneath the surface to understand characters.

3.5 *Values of the Processes*

Here, in a nutshell, are some of the values inherent in experiences of guided, engaged story-sharing. In the first place, it leads participants towards personal knowledge, knowledge they own because they have experienced its source; reflected on it; shared responses with others; and connected it to what they already know. Learning is not passively accepting what others know and expect them to know, but rather creating meanings from what they have heard, seen and felt.

Participating in stories helps strengthen one's sense of self. Readers can try out different selves: ones they wish they could be; ones they might become; or ones they begin to realise they really are and would rather not be. Identifying with characters in stories provides ways to see consequences of stances or actions, and, while outcomes may make the reader feel bad, not as bad as if it had happened to them. Seeing oneself in the mirror of a story may come as a shock. Or, like the children in *The cat in the hat* (Geisel, 1960), children could enjoy the rescue but be aware that, in real life, it would not happen that way. But wouldn't it be nice if it did? Their value systems can be seen and tested in such stories as *Charlotte's web* (White, 1952), where Fern sees the unfairness in the impending destruction of a runt pig and, along with her animal friends, saves its life.[4]

Story experiences support growth in understanding others, in developing empathy for those struggling; in enabling resistance toward those attempting to manipulate or harm others; and in acknowledging and accepting persons who are different. The process of sharing readings with others is valuable in

4 In looking at possibilities for integrating knowledge and ideas in *Charlotte's web*, the Calkins group suggests the possibility of reading more about raising pigs. While they have suggested earlier possible undertones in the detail of the family eating bacon, it is not clear that they see the story as leading to a critique of our factory farming and slaughter of pigs, or conversely that our modern practices would undermine the empathetic approach of the story.

itself as it encourages appreciation for contributions of others and develops the ability to consider divergent views.

The most significant benefit in this time of rapidly changing values and increasing political instability in our world is providing lenses to understand what is going on out there. Should I mention Donald Trump, Brexit, climate change and refugees? What forces are harming the world and its peoples, how did they develop and what can be done to counteract them? Children might learn from the threats of the Big Bad Wolf. Youth can see the fairly sterile concept of racism come alive in Toni Morrison's (1970) *The bluest eye*, as they look through the eyes of children at the multiple forces that harm and finally destroy their friend Pecola. Children might even extend their appreciation for Fern's care for a runt pig and consider how pigs are treated in today's factory farming of pigs.

Finally, the activities involved in responding to stories provide practice in a broad range of thinking processes that are necessary in all aspects of life. Responding to stories builds imagination; awareness of emotion and its, sometimes hidden, powers; and acceptance of the intuitive and temporary and ambiguous and mysterious in life's experiences. Whereas school can bury emotional responses, story-hearing highlights them and thus affirms their reality in people's lives. It is okay to feel as you do. Imagining other possibilities is crucial. The zebra storyteller, in Spencer Holst's (1986) tale by the same name, having invented a preposterous story of a Siamese cat who speaks zebraic, is not "fit to be tied" when he meets that very creature and so, unlike his peers, survives the encounter. As the narrator concludes, "That is the function of the storyteller". (p. 3)

David Brooks (2010) points in emphatic terms to the value of stories: "Deep down people have passions and drives that don't lend themselves to systemic modeling". The artistic languages that represent these, he says, "help us understand these yearnings and also educate and mold them". These passions he calls "The Big Shaggy" and claims, "If you're dumb about the Big Shaggy, you'll probably get eaten by it". (p. A27).

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CHAPTER 5

Oral History and Storytelling: Reflection on an Alternative Approach of Teaching History

Wai-ling Wong

Abstract

Storytelling is a continuous, creative process of making sense of lived experience into a narrative that engages listeners by shared meanings. This definition of storytelling emerged from my attempts to share fishermen's oral histories by the method of storytelling. Though it was known to many that cosmopolitan Hong Kong had been a fishing village, the life of fishermen is not part of our land-based people's everyday knowledge. Oral history was the starting point of the process of sharing fishermen's knowledge. A group of university students were involved in making stories from oral histories. They studied the transcripts, selected interesting short pieces and organised the pieces into a storyline to give shape to the fishermen's accounts. They told these stories to secondary school children in classrooms. Between the original oral history and storytelling, the university students served as a human medium to create and to tell the stories with meaning. They have had to make sense of the unfamiliar lived experiences as told in the oral history; comparing different lifestyles between land and water; and inserting useful knowledge in order for others to appreciate the lifestyle of fishermen. This chapter reviews the role of a human medium in facilitating history learning.

Key Words

Oral history – fishermen – community – learning history – narrative – communication – Hong Kong

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1 The Problem: In Search of an Effective Method of Teaching History

In 2010, we started to promote a project called *School memories,* encouraging secondary school children to collect the history of their school by doing oral history. This project was supported by some passionate history teachers as they

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were looking for effective means to motivate teenage children to learn history. The problem of the formal history curriculum was its lack of connection and relevance with lived experience. The teachers thought that history could be associated with everyday life and children could learn history by doing oral history with the people around them, such as, alumni, teachers and even school janitors. They thought that oral history would be a good method to motivate the learning of history.

At this stage our attention focused on collecting historical information but the results were not always motivating. A lot of effort was spent on doing interviews and transcription but other children did not find joy and motivation from the transcripts. The question of problems with sharing was left unanswered because the funding for the *School memories* project had finished. Fortunately, I started another project, though with different objectives, which allowed me to continue to explore the methodology.

2 From Oral History to Storytelling

The project, *Living on the water*, was to set up a social platform for fishermen, university students and the public to get together and to share the history and culture of fishermen. Hong Kong was known to have developed from a fishing village into a cosmopolitan city under British colonial rule, but little was discussed in local history textbooks about the history of fisheries and fishermen in Hong Kong. This has hindered the development of the sense of community and history of Hong Kong. We started the project by doing oral history with fishermen. Over two years, over 30 university students participated in the project at different stages. I found that the university students were not able to understand what the fishermen shared in the interviews, not only because of the language problem[1] but also because they lacked basic knowledge about the way of life in fishing and the perspectives to listen to others' stories.

For example, a fisherman aged 84 recalled his life as a young fisherman:

> We fished near Shek O, Chek Chu, Nam Wan, Chung Hum and Repulse Bay [spoke this name in English]. Ha, ha, ha, ha [laughs, probably he felt funny speaking in English] … I couldn't go to school because when I was

1 Although the fishermen speak the same dialect, Cantonese, as most of the land people in Hong Kong, most fishermen speak with accents, which are different depending on where their ancestors came from. The fishermen also have a separate set of terminology to name things. Therefore, the fishermen are aware that they speak in different ways from the land dialect and call their particular way of speaking *shuilo wa* (literally meaning water-people language).

> off from school I couldn't find my family and I knew nobody onshore. I cried and refused to go to school any more. (An extract from the interview with fisherman, Mr Lo, on 5 June 2016.)

The lack of response from the university students to the fishermen's laughter was a signal to me that this piece of memory didn't make much sense to them. I stopped the interview for a little while and briefed the university students with contexts in order for them to understand the fishermen's account. First, the places recalled by the fishermen were well known nowadays as beautiful beaches for sightseeing and swimming. The memory of fishing in the water outside the beaches pointed to the change of landscape, behind which was the decline of fisheries and the growth of tourism. Second, children of fishing families were not able to enjoy education because school hours did not match fishing hours. Mr Lo could not find his family's fishing boat after school because, by the time his school finished, his father had already gone off to catch the nocturnal fish. Third, fishing families had not a stable place onshore, which also made it difficult for most fishing folks to go to school.

Obviously, somebody had to do interpretation in order for the fishermen's oral histories to be comprehensible. I therefore shifted the emphasis of the method: Instead of going for more oral history interviews, I led the university students to try the method of storytelling. I trained a group of university students to create and to tell stories of the fishermen. Until then, we had used this method of teaching history with young children, teenage students and the general public on four different programmes.

Instead of reviewing the effectiveness of these programmes, in this chapter, I focus on the process of story construction on the part of the university student tellers. As tellers, they performed the role of history teacher, but in fact, before they could teach, they had to learn the history themselves. The learning process happened when they prepared the scripts for telling the stories.

My experiment started at an exhibition, where I shared the fishermen's oral histories through display boards with brief descriptions, short stories from oral history extracts, photos and innovative visual design. The university students were trained as exhibition guides. I defined the role of the guides to be an agent or a medium of communication between the fishermen and the visitors. They had to join a training workshop of four sessions, where they learned intensive listening and understanding; and then prepared a script of their own through practice and discussion.

At this stage, I did not have a clear idea of how storytelling could be applied as a method for teaching history. I invited a history teacher from the aforementioned enthusiastic group to be an observer, so that I could discuss the experimental methodology with a senior, experienced teacher.

The university students came from diverse disciplines of medicine, science, engineering, education, business, linguistics, literature and history. They had no prior knowledge of fishing, fisheries and fishermen and joined the project voluntarily out of their own initiatives and personal interests.

As a start, I asked them, in pairs, to study the exhibition carefully, so as to be able to give a short talk of ten minutes on a selected theme of the exhibition (four themes in total). It was obvious, that in the ten-minute talks the university students had tried, in their own way, to be an exhibition guide, but with different kinds of shortcomings. The problem of lacking basic knowledge was expected, but I chose not to deliver such information because I thought it would not be effective to give a talk one-sidedly like what we used to do in the classroom. Instead, I offered the related contextual information after each group had given their short talk. In the next sessions, the university students had to prepare a better script based on having more information about fisheries and the fishing way of life.

Before we closed the first session, I invited the observer to give us advice. The history teacher asked us to keep three keywords in mind, context; theme; and emotion, if we wanted to prepare a script that could engage future listeners through an oral presentation. The term *storytelling* jumped into my mind when I combined the three keywords with the objective of sharing and engagement through the act of oral presentation.

3 The Act of Storytelling

This approach of storytelling was not planned prior to the training. It emerged into a so-called method over a period of two years through several different occasions. On each occasion, I consolidated the method based on my observation and assessment of the performance of the university students as guides or story tellers. Let me elaborate on how the method of storytelling evolved through the process.

My efforts in training university students to do storytelling put little emphasis on the skills of speaking. Rather, we spent a lot of time on constructing the stories. But, what is a story? We did not look for definitions from dictionaries or handbook-type manuals. We just worked it out step by step.

For the project, the act of storytelling is a continuous, multi-layered construction. The first layer was the stories, told by the fishermen during oral history interviews. The stories were embodied experiences of the fishermen and were recalled from the questions led by the interviewer. The transcripts of the oral history were first-person accounts, or primary substance that needed to be processed.

The second layer of the stories was the extracts selected by the researcher (myself) from the long transcripts into shorter scripts of 250–350 words. These shorter scripts were selected based on a schema I developed of thematic subjects that could reflect the way of life of Hong Kong's fishermen. Finally, a pool of 262 short interview scripts were formed from the transcripts of 18 fishermen.

There was another step in selecting the short scripts; a small group of two university student guides selected a set of short scripts from this large pool. These were the ones they found more interesting and relevant from the perspectives of the younger generations. The two university students and myself used a method of coding to categorise the separate, discrete extracts into six sub-groups, each with a theme. A larger group of six university students were invited to make sense of these short scripts by writing a brief caption as a subtitle for each short piece.

From these captions came the third layer of the stories. The theme and the subtitle gave a reader some sense of direction and context. One of the six university students prepared a demo of telling the fishermen's story, in which she chose 18 pieces of short scripts from the smaller pool and organised these separate scripts into a storyline.

This demo was video-recorded and shown to a group of newly recruited university student guides. I asked the new recruits to listen to this video as if they were an ordinary audience. After listening to the demo, the university students asked questions about the specialised terminologies used (the fishermen's special way of naming things); areas that they could not understand; and the missing links they found in the storyline. They began to talk about ways to reorganise the short scripts with other storylines and asked whether they could do this when they told the stories.

Their reactions have shown that every listener would attempt to make sense of the stories in their own way, seeing gaps and missing links in the scripts. Although we had done something to package the extracts into comprehensible scripts, we still needed to find links and connections to make sense of these scripts in a larger story. In other words, the act of storytelling is a continuous process with newcomers introducing their preferred ways of processing the substance.

This method, of allowing university students to create their own way of storytelling based on their interests and perspectives, has been applied in subsequent exercises. I noticed that the university students made sense of the stories in different ways so that the fishermen's oral histories could be shared with meaning (Greene & del Negro, 2010, p. 42). In the following, I will summarise the different ways that the university students used to make sense of the fishermen's stories.

4 Different Approaches of Storytelling

First, the university students compared the unfamiliar with the familiar. For example, university student A told the stories to a class of 12-to-13-year-old children:

> What were you doing at 3–4 am last night? [Responses from the class: sleeping, playing computer games…] Of course you were sleeping. Playing computer games? Ha, ha, ha, that is not a good habit. For the fishermen who caught shrimps, at 3–4 am they were already working at sea, they had a lifestyle different from ours. Their clock started at 5–6 pm every day when they started to drive their boat to the fishing ground. They worked in the night and slept in the day … (An extract from the storytelling session at Christian Alliance SW Chan Memorial College on 26 January 2016.)

It was an account of a fishermen's daily life round the clock. The tendency of the student who tried this approach was to look for the connection between the people from two different worlds by making comparison. This approach had the advantage of engaging the listeners to stand into the shoes of the fishermen and imagined how lives would be for a stranger from the land to live on the water. Borrowing from what Greene discusses about the value of storytelling, I find that storytelling creates the sense of community between the fishermen and the land people through such comparison of lifestyles.

Second, there was a lesson to learn from the experiences of the others. For example, university student B told the same story of a shrimp fishermen's lifestyle in a different way:

> The fishermen had to lead a lifestyle reversing day and night. Imagine, it was a hard life. Why do they keep on working as fishermen if life was so harsh? They must have found fun and happiness in it, and they have the perseverance over hardship and boredom. We should learn from them as many of us easily quit something when we find it difficult and harsh. (An extract from the storytelling session to a group of primary school children at Stanley Community Centre on 27 March 2016.)

This was an approach based on an assumption that the experiences of others were irrelevant to us. The university students found the link by introducing the lesson we should learn from the others. These lessons were usually the virtues or positive values recognised and approved by the society. The university

student continues, "The fishermen could stand hardship, why couldn't we?" This approach also had the advantage of giving importance to the fishermen who were considered to be inferior in social status in Hong Kong.

Third, some university students engaged the audience by introducing emotional components into the stories (Fields & Diaz, 2008, p. 3). The university students usually applied this approach when they told the stories of fishermen facing hostilities out on the waters. For example, university student C described one dangerous incident at sea:

> There were unexpected dangers on the sea. A fisherman called Sin Wai Lun was almost killed in a trip to catch shrimps in Tonkin Bay, the sea at the boundary between Guangxi, China and Vietnam. When they were working in the dark, remember shrimp fishermen had to work in the night, suddenly they heard some noise, bang, bang, bang, bang! There were bullets flying over their heads. They were so scared that they quickly rushed back into the cabin and wrapped themselves with cotton quilts. You know, it was so sudden and so scary. Although wrapping with wadded quilts could not help at all, that was what they did under this emergency situation. (An extract from the storytelling session at Christian Alliance SW Chan Memorial College on 21 January 2016.

■ Please check the unmatched open parenthesis in the sentence "...extract from the storytelling".

The university student described the incident using a particular speaking tone and adjectives loaded with tense emotion to trigger the emotion of the audience. At the end, some university students concluded the story with the approach of learning a moral: "The fishermen risked their lives to catch fish for us, we should be grateful when we enjoy the seafood on our dining table". Some students concluded the story like this: "The fishermen were so adventurous and brave when they caught fish" as a way to give shape to the personality of fishermen.

Lastly, some university students found logical gaps and holes in the original short pieces. To fill these, the university students became aware of the larger context, which led them to see the link between the micro (people's livelihoods and lifestyles) and the macro (the environment). For example, one engineering university student explained why the fishermen spent several months on one fishing trip:

> Fishermen returned to their home port only during Chinese New Year and at times under a fishing moratorium. Otherwise, they would spend several months at sea. Why do they spend so much time at sea? Because making fewer trips back to the home port could help cutting costs on

> fuel. But how do they sell fish to the market and how do they find food and water if they don't return home? A kind of fishing boat called a "fish collector" emerged that came to buy fish from the fishermen and in return sold them food and drinking water. Why did they do this? This was the most effective means to collect fresh fish from the fishermen, to compete with the fish wholesalers from mainland China. (An extract from the storytelling session at Aberdeen Industrial School on 27 June 2016.)

The university student employed economic terms like competition and cost effectiveness and related the livelihood of Hong Kong fishermen with the changes in mainland China, which had a strong demand for fish consumption under a boosting economy. This is what is described as the link between context and social lives through storytelling (Fields & Diaz, 2008, p. 3).

5 Discussion: Storytelling in the Context of Teaching History

I have shared why storytelling is used in teaching and learning history and how oral history materials are constructed into fishermen's stories. From these experimental attempts, I have become more aware of what storytelling is in this context.

First, the stories of people's experiences are a multi-layered construction. Storytelling is a continuous, creative process to make sense of ordinary lived experiences into a narrative that can engage the listeners to find meanings.

Second, between oral history and narratives, we have engaged human agency (the university student tellers) to do storytelling. When the human agent serves as a medium, they do not function with a neutral, fixed form. They make sense of the original accounts, imagine how they will communicate with the audience, and so apply their way of thinking (interpretation) in various ways to construct the narrative.

Third, the different approaches of interpretation, looking for connection and relevance; understanding human lives in context; and sharing the emotions and values of people from different worlds and generations, are simultaneous acts of learning history. This is consistent with the trend of viewing history as a culture-specific construct. I developed this way of understanding what history is from my readings on oral history. One useful reference is Dunaway (1996, pp. 7–22).

Lastly, there is a question of authorship as I involved university student tellers to tell fishermen's stories rather than allowing the fishermen to tell their own stories as a first-person account (Lundby, 2009, pp. 6–7). This is a question

that needs to be explored more thoroughly. My view is that both first-person storytelling and third-person storytelling are meaningful. The first-person storytelling allowed the narrator to be heard by the listeners directly. In the situation of the fishermen in Hong Kong, a third-person storytelling is more communicative for general citizens. The third-person storytelling is meaningful in the sense that the third-person narrators give new meanings to the first-person accounts. This keeps alive the cultural heritage of fishermen. The history is not a dead history, but a history composed of a multi-layered construction of meanings (Greene & del Negro, 2010, pp. 47–48).

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CHAPTER 6

Storytelling as a Research Tool in a User-centred Design Process

Denise Dantas

Abstract

User-centred design is an approach that focuses on the needs and desires of users of products, information or systems, instead of privileging formal or technical aspects. To get designers closer to users, storytelling is a valuable research tool to understand subjective aspects (such as the memorable significance that users assigned to a product's possession and use) of the relationship between the user and products. The inclusion of storytelling as a research tool in a postgraduate Design and Architecture research course (University of São Paulo, Brazil) was seen as a way to move students toward the unusual aspect of feelings about some products. In the classes, the theory-related aspects of storytelling were presented as a part of research tools for different classes using Empathic Design references. After this theoretical part, some students applied the tool in their research, analysed the results and evaluated the methods and process. I highlight three works developed during the discipline in order to demonstrate that storytelling is an important tool to be used in user-centred design approaches as a way to break apart researchers' stereotypes and prejudices.

Keywords

Design process – user-centred design – human centred design – storytelling – qualitative research – empathic design

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1 Introduction

In their latest version, the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID, 2016) defined Industrial Design as, "a strategic problem-solving process that drives innovation, builds business success and leads to a better

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quality of life through innovative products, systems, services, and experiences". In their document, they highlighted that, "Industrial designers place the human in the centre of the process. They acquire a deep understanding of user needs through empathy and apply a pragmatic, user-centric problem-solving process to design products, systems, services, and experiences". This definition may seem obvious to lay people and it is, in fact, an important approach from the 1960s. However, during the history of Industrial Design, the hegemonic vision of design in the first half of the 20th century was based on satisfying production needs and, after the 1970s, marketing needs. The formal aspects of objects had been overvalued while the needs of users undervalued. When, in 2016, the ICSID formally included human needs at the center of the design process, human- centred design acquired more importance than the traditional approach, which prevailed in the first half of the 20th century.

User-centred design (UCD) can be defined as "[...] an approach to design that grounds the process in information about the people who will use the product. UCD processes focus on users through the planning, design, and development of a product". (Usability Professional Association, 2012). This definition is still a bit utilitarian, centred on use instead of human needs. It is an ergonomic approach. Deepening this approach, human-centred design (HCD) puts human needs in the centre of the design process. It can be defined as,

■ Reference "Usability Professional Association, 2012" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

> [...] an approach that integrates multidisciplinary expertise towards enhancing human well-being and empowering people. It leads to systems, machines, products, services and processes which are physical, perceptually, cognitively and emotionally intuitive to use [....] The human centred designer is a relatively transparent figure who does not impose his or her preferences on a project, but, instead, conveys and translates the will of the people in order to empower them through the final design solution. [...] Human centred design involves techniques which communicate, interact, empathise and stimulate the people involved, obtaining an understanding of their needs, desires and experiences which often transcends that which the people themselves actually knew and realised. (HCD Institute, 2012) ■ Reference "hcd Institute, 2012" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

As an interdisciplinary discipline, HCD searches for a common ground between the needs of designers and people in order to design better products, systems and information for the improvement of the quality of life. To bring together design and quality of life, it uses qualitative research methods to grasp users' stories and interpret them. One important concept of HCD is empathy. Empathy can be defined as, "the ability to share someone else's feelings or

experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation" (Cambridge Online Dictionaries, 2016) or, "the psychological identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another". (Cambridge Online Dictionaries, 2016). For Carl Rogers (1985, 2001), empathy is not a reflexive response to another person's behaviour but is a developed or learned ability that establishes affective and cognitive bonds between two or more people when each of them allows the other to, deliberately, sensitise and become involved with their lives. Koskinen and Battarbee (2003, p. 45) define that, "When we talk about 'empathic design,' we mean empirical research techniques that provide designers access to how users experience their material surroundings and the people in it, including themselves as key characters of their everyday lives". Understanding human needs is a challenge of the 21st century for the industrial design field. Human needs are not an exact science. In this context, storytelling is a valuable research tool, especially useful to understand subjective aspects about the relation between the users and products, such as the memorable significance that users assigned to it by possession and use. Here I present the inclusion of storytelling as a research tool in a postgraduate design and architecture research course at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, as a way to move students toward the unusual aspects of feelings about products and feelings about using them.

■ Reference "Cambridge Online Dictionaries, 2016" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

■ Reference "Carl Roger's 1985" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

2 The User-centred Design Discipline: An Overview

Briefly, the user-centred design class (UCD) is structured as a theoretical and practical course, with students being encouraged to apply the concepts and tools from the theory, presented in 15 weeks, in their research. Principles and methods used in a user-centred design approach and applied analysis methods for developing new products and communication or service design are presented, building skills in research techniques involving combinations of people, scenarios and objects. The theoretical content is mainly related to authors from Psychology, the proposal being to apply its concepts to human-centred design. The methods and tools for research are mainly from qualitative research methods (Angrosino, 2009; Bauer & Gaskell, 2010; and Flick (2009a, 2009b). Design is presented through an Empathic Design approach and its tools (Koskinen, Battarbee & Mattelmäki, 2003). All of these authors and concepts are discussed in class to construct a specific view about users' needs and human factors applied to industrial design. In this context, storytelling is presented as a qualitative research tool. According to Koch (1997, p. 1183), "People live stories, and in their telling of them, reaffirm them, modify them, and

■ Please check the unmatched open parenthesis in the sentence "mainly from qualitative research...".

■ Reference "Koch 1997" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

create new ones. Stories, when well crafted, are spurs to the imagination, and through our imaginative participation in the created worlds, empathic forms of understanding are advanced". To industrial design research, storytelling is an important tool to perceive the subjectivity of people in using and having, for instance, objects and spaces. Bartabee (2003) reminds us that,

■ Reference "Bartabee (2003)" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

> Stories are subjective and should be understood as dramatized and edited versions of experiences [...] However, understanding those subjective experiences is a key to understanding facts and making objective data relevant. [...] Stories are also ambiguous and people interpret them from different personal experiences and professional backgrounds. (2003, pp. 108–109)

It is especially useful to understand subjective impressions, motivation, unknown and unspeakable aspects of the relationships between people and their products. During the course, students are stimulated to practise this tool in one of these modes: writing or talking (and recording). They get in touch with their main target and hear/read their stories. Below, I present three case studies that used the storytelling tool to understand users' impressions and desires. In all related cases, the stories are analysed using content analysis and discourse analysis (Flick, 2009).

■ Please clarify whether the reference Flick 2009 should be changed to Flick 2009a or 2009b.

3 Applying Theory: Case Studies of Real Design Research in Progress

Case 1: Storytelling as a method of gathering perceptions and experiences to understand the relationship between children and their eyeglasses

Chaves *et al.* (2014) describe the use of storytelling as a method of gathering perceptions and experiences to understand the relationship between children and their eyeglasses. As a part of his Master's Degree at the University of São Paulo (2014), Chaves presents the details of the storytelling tool applied to children between 7 and 11 years old, using writing as the storytelling method for gathering information from the children. The aim was to collect information about the use of glasses from 30 children in different regions of Brazil, 15 girls and 15 boys using prescription glasses. The proposed theme for storytelling was "I and my eyeglasses". We expected that the children would create imaginative stories, but that did not happen. The results and analysis showed eight different categories of information, including, for example, medical examination and eye disease. The discussions were more about real issues with the product, like emotions and experiences related to their use. We also expected that the

■ Reference "São Paulo 2014" is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

narratives would relate to aspects of prejudice suffered by children who wear glasses, but that also did not happen. In this case, storytelling tells us that children are able to respond objectively about products that they use, and if we need more imaginative and subjective responses, it would perhaps be important to use a non-generic title to begin the process.

Case 2**:** Storytelling to understand what children expected about the new playground in São Paulo.

This case, by Vieira (2015), uses storytelling as one of the tools to understand what children expected about new kinds of playgrounds in São Paulo. It is an unpublished study, part of the UCD in 2015. This activity was done in a writing class at school with 40 children between 9 and 10 years old. The theme presented was, *Playing with playground toys in public playground parks*. We expected narratives about some situations that really occurred, funny or exciting ones. This did not happen. The main categories were related to, like playing in the playground because it is fun; does not like to play in the playground because it is dangerous; not liked because it is for younger children; and not liked because they prefer to do other activities like playing with a ball, bike or digital devices. Storytelling showed impressions of the action "playing" but not about the toys. This experience demonstrated that using this tool at school maybe is not the best approach because children tend to apply the same procedures used for writing for their teacher, meaning that spontaneous stories did not emerge.

Case 3**:** Storytelling as a qualitative research method and tool applied to the study of the suitability to the real needs of users of the interior design of truck sleeper cabins sold in Brazil

This study is part of Ph.D. research, "Study of the suitability of the interior design of truck sleeper cabins sold in Brazil to the real needs of users", from Mello (University of São Paulo). Some of the results are already published (Mello *et al.*, 2015) and compare distinct methods and tools. Storytelling is one of them. In this chapter, I present only the storytelling tool and discuss if it was effective or not for this specific target group. The use of storytelling, in this case, was intended to "give voice" to users and to understand what was their worst memory about a critical incident in the cabin, such as, the longest trip, and, on the other hand, their dreams about an ideal cabin. It is important to highlight the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the participants. On February 18, 2016, the Nacional Transport Confederation (*Confederação Nacional do Transporte*, CNT) released the profile of Brazilian truck drivers (2016). 1066 interviews were made in 12 states that had the largest fleet of trucks. The truck drivers are 99.8% male with an average age of 45 years. 16.4% have only Primary School education; 39% have only unfinished secondary school and 41.5% have completed High School or Secondary school. 65.6% of truck drivers

have not finished Secondary School. The low educational level observed is directly related to the level of results that Mello *et al.* (2015) obtained. Three truck drivers, between 33 and 48 years old, accepted the invitation to participate in this part of the research. They have elementary- or medium-educational level. Two questions were presented to the participants:

1. Tell me a story about the trip you spent most time in this cabin?
2. In the future, how do you imagine the ideal interior of a sleeper cabin?

The first question is based on a critical incident of when their experience had been out of the ordinary. Critical incidents are from memory and are not necessarily "the truth". In fact, the truth is not important in this case because what we really needed were the impressions, memories and sensations from users. The related aspects revealed some important questions to be observed after using other techniques like participatory observation, for example.

The second question invoked some users' desires and aspirations, dependent upon their ability to communicate them. Being pragmatic people, it is strange for these users to think in terms of "desires". Storytelling was considered to be something childish, pointless and impractical. Users tended to seek logic in their answers and had difficulty to understand how to write this narrative. They were not comfortable to write narratives and this may be due to the generally low education level. To work around this discomfort with written narratives, they were made orally, what turned out to be the wrong approach for this kind of research tool. The first question, "the longest trip in the cabin", was easily answered if compared to the other ones because the narrative was based on memory and sensation about a real fact. It was useful to identify, "striking aspects of the cabin in a critical episode of use". The second question, however, did not work as expected. It was difficult for the truck drivers to talk about something that is not real yet. If we think it will be possible to understand their dreams in an innovative way, we are completely wrong. They demonstrate that is hard for them to imagine new possibilities; they are able only to improve items already available. Nonetheless, it was relevant for us in evaluating and improving our research approach and emphasised the important difference between the oral and written methods of narrative, comparing these results with the other two cases presented here.

4 Conclusions

The results show that storytelling is an important tool to be used in a user-centred design approach as a way to break apart researchers' stereotypes and prejudices. Comparing the results obtained from different ages, educational

level, and social classes, we can recommend some additional procedures to use before applying the technique and during the analytic phase. Every user has something to tell designers but, often, it is not clear, even to themselves, what this is. Low educational level is an obstacle to be overcome if this tool is to be applied to all people, not only because of difficulty in writing narratives but also in imagining them. The beginning of the process will be reviewed to try to let users be in comfortable situations without the presence of authorities. To apply this tool with children, it is important to consider their stage of development and the place for the tell or writing of stories (for example, avoiding school places). In every single case, the assumptions held by researchers were not confirmed.

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PART 2

Media Perspectives

Introduction to Part 2

Laurinda Brown

The second part of this book, comprising five chapters, focuses on a range of perspectives related to media, including digital storytelling, virtual reality and websites.

Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė (Chapter 7) opens with an anthropological investigation into Lithuanian and Latvian life-cycle websites. These websites might focus, say, on providing resources for weddings or christenings and have cultural, religious and commercial aspects, providing material for exploring digital storytelling or visual narratives. This chapter considers the role and forms of digital storytelling in the life-cycle websites.

Shunichi Ueno (Chapter 10) continues the exploration of visual storytelling from a Japanese perspective within the worlds of manga, anime and Japanese films, now enjoyed worldwide. Given an image, like the one I thought of when reading Ueno's chapter, Escher's *Three worlds*, which has its own *Wikipedia* page, what do you see? The large fish seen through the water, perhaps? Or are you interested in the environment of the world reflected in the surface of the pond that has leaves resting on it? As a western academic, I definitely saw the fish, however, Japanese readers might "attempt to collect information about the environment" and so, in the world of manga, Japanese cartoonists consider their viewers, creating a distinctive style; a simplicity of art.

For Leona Ungerer (Chapter 8) the question is how to support learners in resource-poor environments. Mobile phones seem to be everywhere, so how can free or cheap applications be utilised? One of these applications, *Chopper*, a manga-comic creating resource amongst other possibilities, is accessed via a page with an opening image that has the Japanese distinctive style, a simplicity of art. What seems to be important is that the user is in control, writing their story; publishing their book; being able to add their own drawings to images through use of the technology.

Nina Dvorko (Chapter 9) continues this theme through engaging with virtual reality, immersive digital storytelling and non-fiction played out through docu-games, where the player is interacting with the world around them, in, for instance, the Arctic, Aleppo or a rainforest tree. In the title of a TED talk, Chris Milk (2015) describes virtual reality as capable of creating "the ultimate empathy machine". As viewer, you are also creating your experience, "directing [your] view and changing perspective at will", so, as documentary maker, or

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storyteller, how do you encourage viewers to look at the things you want them to see?

Through all these chapters, resonating with Jobb (Chapter 1) there is the issue of telling true stories engagingly using the techniques that fictional authors would employ. The medium here, however, is primarily digital or visual, with websites, and tools such as virtual reality headsets, providing entry to worlds that would not be accessible otherwise, no matter how uncomfortable. Digital storytelling can provide the ultimate empathy machine.

CHAPTER 7

Digital Storytelling on Life-Cycle Websites

Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė

Abstract

As anthropologists have become increasingly engaged with the study of digital visual anthropology, the issues of digital storytelling or visual narrative have emerged as central concerns. This chapter examines visual stories as the narratives filled with ethnographic, historical, religious, commercial and cross-cultural contexts. Visual stories on the web communicate in a different way and invoke understandings in a way that words alone cannot. Images, as visual field notes, include stories of people, places, events, impressive performances and practices. In this chapter, I pose two related questions: What is the role of digital storytelling in the life-cycle websites? What are the forms of digital storytelling in the life-cycle websites? The basis for digital ethnographic analysis is visual storytelling from life-cycle commemorations websites, focusing on photographs, images, movies and written texts comprising that site. During my field research, I was exploring how digital visual representations created meanings in relation to written texts. To sum up, visual analysis of digital storytelling helped me to analyse, understand and discover the life-cycle celebrations as individual, social and also as commercial phenomena.

Key words

Digital storytelling – visual narratives – life-cycle websites – Lithuanian and Latvian – family – commemorations

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1 Introduction

In recent years, digital media have become an increasingly integral part of visual studies. The most prominent works by visual anthropologists, such as, Sarah Pink (2011, 2013, 2015); Marcus Banks (2001); Marcus Banks & Jay Ruby (Eds., 2011); Marcus Banks & David Zeitlyn (2015); and Gillian Rose (2015) have

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created a theoretical background for digital visual anthropology. Pink defined digital visual anthropology as a site for research, a method of research or both. She (2011) emphasises that digital media could be used by visual anthropologists "as a component of research methods; as a form of 'visual culture' for analysis; and as a means of representing and disseminating (audio)visual knowledge" (p. 209). Folklorist Trevor J. Blank (2014) theorises the internet as an important area of expressive vernacular culture, an important analytical venue for folklorists, and sets the agenda for digital folklore research. He claims that the recurrence and emergence of new narrative variations are inevitable in internet folklore, because various elements of folk culture are created and transmitted online.

It is important to understand how various visual elements of folk and pop culture are created and transmitted online. There are different ways in which, "folk culture adapts, influences, rejects and responds to changing cultural tides, especially amid the exponential growth of computer-mediated communication technologies" (Fernandez, 2014, [blog] 30 June).

As anthropologists have become increasingly engaged in studying digital visual anthropology, the emerging central concerns are regarding digital storytelling or visual narrative. A definition of digital storytelling could be a form and process of digital media production combining photographs, video, sound, music, written texts and inviting people to interact, sharing their stories in various ways. Therefore, "digital storytelling is an especially good tool of technology for collecting, creating, analyzing and combining visual images with written texts" (Robin, 2008, p. 222). There are various digital storytelling types, such as, personal narratives, urban legends, informative stories, narratives examining historical, ethnographic or religious events.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on digital stories appearing on websites of life-cycle commemorations, for instance, births, christenings, weddings and funerals. Such stories compound visual, acoustic and written texts, functioning on websites as phenomena of contemporary, popular and folk cultures.

2 Research Methodology

Employment of the visual anthropology approach here involves the use of ethnographic methods, striving for a more holistic representation of the research object. There are observations of emergent visual forms and communicative expressions in websites on life-cycle commemorations. Moreover, there is an exploration of how a visual representation creates meaning relative to written texts.

The basis for this analysis is visual storytelling from life-cycle commemorations websites focusing on photographs, images, movies and written texts comprising that site. Consequently, a qualitative approach is used for analysing visual and content data from websites.

This chapter describes visual images, photography and other visuals as tools for data collection and analysis on websites. On the one hand, use of visual images can be data sources and tools for data collection. On the other hand, their use can also be a research method and a medium for dialogue.

There is a diversity of ways to read, understand and contextualise visual images. Wright (1999) describes three approaches to reading photographs: looking through, looking at and looking behind (p. 38). Banks (2001) focuses in particular on the first and third of Wright's approaches, but he employs a slightly different terminology, that emphasises the element of readership and is concerned with the social rather than the individual construction of meaning. Banks references the content of an image as its internal narrative that that image communicates. He employs the external narrative as a social context producing that image (p. 11).

The investigation described in this chapter has been a first step into this field. The preliminary study lasted nine months across 2015–2016. Lithuanian and Latvian websites on family celebrations served as the source for collecting ethnographic data. There were 20 websites used to understand, how people follow old and create new traditions; share knowledge; and provide meaning to family celebrations on the web. Of these, 10 websites were chosen as the most representative for this chapter. The following were the main questions pertinent to the critical visual and content website analyses: How do images and written texts communicate and circulate on websites? How do images and texts express cultural values in the cultural context?

3 Lithuanian and Latvian Websites on Family Commemorations/Celebrations

The research object comprises companies planning family celebrations, rather popular businesses on the web. The websites of family commemorations/celebrations, such as, baptisms, weddings and funerals, are frequent website marketplaces. Their visual images, marketing communications and mass media promote celebratory products and services.

A presentation of Lithuanian and Latvian family commemoration websites for researching digital storytelling include advertising images, photographs, movies and verbal texts. Visual, phonic and written texts functioning on

websites as a phenomenon of contemporary popular culture, which has many commonalities with folklore.

First, the website for christening celebrations, *Viskas krikštui* (Everything for a Christening), is the largest portal in Lithuania offering different christening services. Everything for planning and organising a christening ceremony is here: a directory of services and products; churches; celebratory scripts; and gift ideas. Currently, this portal has published over 150 articles about baptism ceremonies and christening traditions, toasts and greetings, Christian names and relevant services or goods. The website includes baptism ceremonies; ideas for pertinent prayers and music; celebratory decorations, clothing, gifts, foods, photography, invitation cards and scripts; transport means and needs for planning a christening. The analysis of the visual narratives from this christening website shows the predominate symbol groups for decorating a christening celebration to be: (1) angels; (2) flowers; (3) insects (ladybirds, butterflies); (4) fruits (apples, strawberries); (5) feet and shoes; (6) toys like wooden horses; and (7) animals (teddy bears, storks and baby elephants). Some religious images, especially Christian symbols, circulate among the photographs in this christening website, such as, a cross; sanctified water; oil; and a baptism candle. Some of the goods offered (for example, a cross and a baptism candle) can be used as gifts for godchildren as well as for general consumption. In summary, visual storytelling is a compound of two types of visuals, Christian images and consumerist goods' images, expressing the cultural values of current society.

The next research object is the Lithuanian portal *Maža paslaugėlė* (Small kindness for celebration and christening). The website offers various staple products for christening celebrations, such as, christening gowns; rompers; and bonnets and hats. Other products include, a christening veil decorated with flowers; baptism candles; candle decorations; and gift items, like different boxes for teaspoons or jewellery. The visual and verbal domains contain advertisements for such products, stimulating visitors to consume them. Information about pertinent products, such as, the Christian baptism sacrament and significance of its signs; and ancient Pagan name-giving traditions, appear in four languages (Lithuanian, Latvian, English and Russian) to assist international visitors. In summary, visual and written storytelling on the websites comprise a compound of three types of stories, Christian, Pagan and consumer-society traditions.

Vestuves.lt (Wedding.lt) is a wedding website with a catalogue. It is the biggest wedding portal in Lithuania offering various services, which include products, such as, wedding apparel; accessories; décor and floristry; beauticians; foods; wedding party sites; photography and video recordings; inviting and planning services; music and dancing; carriages; weddings and honeymoons abroad; and gifts for newlyweds and guests. The multitude of photographs

and movies on the website indicate the popularity of the services offered. Photographs portray original ideas for planned photo sessions of newlyweds, for example, underwater in Rodo Island or parachute jumping or for a party decorated in vegetables. Decorations offered can be, for example, for a rustic wedding, usually in some old barn, or out in nature. One popular idea is an eco-style wedding using processed paper for invitations; field flowers; natural products for the menu; and ecological transport means by bicycles or horse-drawn carriages. The visual analysis of this portal shows that the majority of the photographs and movies here orient to the consumption of commercial products and services. The extremely strong influence of the visual industry dictates the aesthetic taste of current, post-modern society with new fashion trends, which weddings particularly reflect. A current wedding seems reminiscent of theatre, where action combines with visual, acoustic and verbal symbols.

A Latvian website, *Svētki Jums* (*Your celebrations*), highlights high-class services for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and other commemorations; family celebrations and children's parties; as well as for theme parties. The analysis of the visual storytelling of this website shows certain groups of symbols predominating in celebrations and parties. The first type involves theme parties, for example, carnivals; gatherings of pirates, knights, cowboys or others; disco or gothic-style parties; beer feasts; and weddings. The second type is a nationally based party (such as Hawaiin; Italian; American Indian; Mexican; Eastern and Indian style; Brazilian or Venetian carnivals). The basis of the third type constitutes storytelling motifs of popular movies, books and animated cartoons, such as, *The matrix*; *Star Wars; Austin Powers*; *Water-nymph*; and *Russian folk tales*. The basis of the fourth group involves thematic topics, for example, colour or fruit motifs. The visual analysis shows that the movies represented in this portal orient to pop culture and consumption of commercial goods and services. In summary, noticeable in this digital storytelling is a strong value-orientation to pop culture and manifestations defined by globalisation processes. A close, observable relationship is between the marketing of goods and services for celebrating and significances of visual images. On the one hand, visual images express the cultural context of consumption, on the other hand, "consumers themselves sacralize consumption objects and thereby create transcendent meaning in their lives" (Belk, Wallendorf & Sherry, 1989, p. 32).

The Latvian portal *Mammām un Tētiem* (For mothers and fathers) and the website *Māminu klubs* (*Club for mothers*) represents Latvian name-giving rituals based on neo-Pagan *Dievturība* traditions. (These people live in harmony with nature and the Gods). According to *Dievturība* customs, name-giving and weddings rituals can happen in a public or a private setting. These neo-Pagans utilise elements like chanting, singing, dancing and visualisations during family celebrations. Pagan worship typically takes place in nature and involves

offerings, including foods such as bread; cake; fruits; cheese; milk and beer; as well as flowers, often accompanied by religious rituals (prayers, songs and a bonfire). Generally, the digital storytelling represented in this website orients to the neo-Pagan world outlook and values.

The Lithuanian website *Romuva.lt* (*Romuva is a* name of an ancient religious community of Balts), as well as the Latvian ancient religious community of Balts *Dievturība*, present life-cycle celebrations according to the traditional, ethnically-based religion of Baltic people, reviving the ancient religious practices before the Christianisation of Baltic nations. *Romuva* claims to be continuing Baltic Pagan rituals, which have survived in folklore and customs (Ignatow, 2007, p. 104). Photographs, movies and written texts about ancient customs transmit the digital storytelling about neo-Pagan family celebrations. The majority of photographs represented in this website orient to neo-Pagan rituals. Similarly to Banks (2001, pp. 11–12), visual images, like internal narratives, communicate and produce a social context of external narratives in photographs.

Visual presentations of unique Latvian wedding traditions as well as christenings and funerals appear in the official webpage of the Suiti region, *Suitu novads*. Suiti is a small Latvian Catholic community (2800 inhabitants), living in the Western part of Latvia, near the Baltic seacoast. In 2009, UNESCO's *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage* included the Suiti cultural space. This website presents distinct features of the Suiti cultural space including "vocal drone singing performed by Suiti women, wedding traditions, colorful traditional costumes, language, cuisine, religious traditions, celebrations of seasonal traditions and a remarkable number of folksongs, dances and melodies" as well as ancient forms of extended Suiti family structures. The movie, *Preserving centuries* (2009), presented in this webpage, visually describes the most important cultural values, history, religious life, old wedding traditions and mentality of the Suiti community. Visual images, such as, national costumes in their wedding rituals as well as the synthesis of pre-Christian traditions and Roman Catholic rituals, create a unique, visual storytelling in combination with the intangible cultural heritage of the Suiti community.

The Latvian website *Ticība, Draugi & Dzīve* (Faith, friends & life) is for Christians and for persons without any link to a religion, who have never been in any church (page_id=6666). Many photographs by Valter Korālis in the website prove that the offered services provide great alternatives for the celebrations the Latvian civil registry offers. Korālis is a Latvian pastor and private organiser of life-cycle celebrations. The website offers a marriage ceremony with balloons in heaven that is quite unusual. Advertisements for such services appear in visual and written domains. This website advertisement informs about a marriage in heaven unique in Latvia and the Baltics. The website offers baptism

and marriage ceremonies in Latvian, English and Russian according to their respective traditional liturgy. The website also advertises that spouses may represent various religions or may not have any religious affiliations. A couple may get a special wedding certificate (or one for a silver or gold anniversary), which is entered into the official Latvian register (page_id=3742). An advertisement for funeral services also appears in the visual as well as written domains. These can include visits to the dying at home, at a care home or a hospital; spiritual ministrations such as Holy Communion and prayers before death; and, after death, holding vigil until dawn like an ancient tradition, farewell words and burial ceremonies. This website also offers traditional burial alternatives, such as, burial of urns with ashes or scattering ashes from a ship; air balloon; or the steep bank of a river. Services after funerals can be visits to relatives and blessing the previous home of the deceased. In summary, the website *Ticība, Draugi & Dzīve* presents digital storytelling of the main life cycle commemorations by three forms: visuals (photographs by Korālis), written descriptions of ceremonies and promotional articles or interviews by Korālis.

In summary, the notable aspect of the digital narratives on websites for family commemorations/celebrations is the variety of their expressions. They contain ethnographic; historical; ethnic; religious; commercial; and cross-cultural contexts. Visual storytelling reveals how marketing acts as a representational system, producing meanings beyond the realm of the advertised product or service by connecting images to a broader, cultural context. (Schroeder, 2006, p. 320). At the same time, our "initial understandings or readings of visual images are pre-scripted, written in advance and it is useful to attempt to stand back from them, to acquire a broader perspective" (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015, p. 7). As Schroder emphasises, "by connecting images to the cultural context of consumption, researchers gain a more thorough (yet never complete) understanding of how images embody and express cultural values and contradictions" (Schroeder, 2006, p. 303). Theory of visual consumption helps us to show, "how cultural codes and representational conventions inform contemporary marketing images, infusing them with visual, historical and rhetorical presence and power" (Schroeder, 2006, p. 303).

4 Conclusion

The visual and content analyses show that websites of life-cycle commemorations/ celebrations interactively combined visual images, texts and movies creating digital storytelling and utilising the web as a form of ethnographic research and dissemination.

The analysis, based on the visual ethnographic approach and written textual content, discovers a possible grouping of storytelling on family commemoration/celebration websites. These are (1) narratives by Christian religious groups (Catholics or Lutherans), (2) stories by neo-Paganish groups like *Romuva* in Lithuania and *Dievturība* in Latvia, (3) narratives on ethnic groups, *e.g.*, the *Suiti* in Latvia and (4) stories about products told by their sellers.

What is the role of digital storytelling in life-cycle websites? One conclusion is that website storytelling plays a distinctive role in two regards, functioning both as a form of social communications and as a pluralistic forum for exchanging new ideas.

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CHAPTER 8

Digital Storytelling: Possible Applications in an Open Distance E-Learning Environment

Leona Ungerer

Abstract

In digital storytelling, digital tools and methods such as video, audio and social media are used to share and communicate ideas and information. Digital storytelling can be integrated in curricula across many subjects and offers students an opportunity to be actively engaged as creators instead of mere consumers of digital media. Most studies on digital storytelling reflect conditions in digitally-rich contexts that incorporate software programmes and technologies not accessible to students in resource-poor environments. Investigating how digital storytelling can contribute to innovative teaching and learning practices in developing countries, may offer innovative opportunities for enhancing digital literacies in an open distance e-learning (ODeL) context. The University of South Africa (Unisa) follows an ODeL approach. Its students have to reflect certain graduate attributes on completing their studies in an ODeL environment, which digital storytelling may assist in developing. The complexities involved in introducing digital storytelling in higher education; the effort in supporting students with diverse levels of digital literacy; and their varied access to technologies, may prohibit its introduction in resource-poor environments. Research on the use of digital storytelling in such environments may guide efforts in this field, for instance, investigating the opportunities that mobile digital storytelling offers.

Key Words

Applications – assessment – curricula – digital literacy – digital storytelling – mobile phones – open distance learning – resource-poor environments – University of South Africa – Web 2.0

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1 Introduction

Digital storytelling includes a process whereby digital tools and means, such as, video; audio; social media; and blogging are used to share and communicate ideas and information effectively (Robin, 2008). Narrative and digital-media content merge in this process, providing a popular strategy to combine learning environments and engaging technology-based activities that offer alternative options for university students to express themselves. Digital stories often consist of self-made digital media, such as short movie clips, created with readily available equipment and software that incorporate text, images, music and narration (Robin, 2008).

It is fairly easy to initiate a digital story, being merely necessary to develop an idea, collect digital content and then select the necessary tools that will convey the story or personal narrative (Rebmann, 2012). Gachago *et al.* (2014) provide more detail. They indicate that a typical digital storytelling process involves research; brainstorming; developing the concept; writing a script; developing a storyboard; finding images or creating a video; editing; and publishing and screening the movie.

2 Elements of Digital Storytelling

The *Seven elements of digital storytelling* (cited in Savva, 2015, n. p.) often serves as a basis for effectively using digital stories in teaching. These elements are, point; dramatic question; emotional content; pacing; gift of your voice; economy; and soundtrack.

Morra (cited in Savva, 2015) adapted the seven elements in her explanation and visual representation of the process of digital storytelling, which includes eight steps, namely,

1. Come up with an idea. Write a proposal
2. Research/Explore/Learn
3. Write/Script
4. Storyboard/plan
5. Gather/Create Images. Gather/Create Audio.
6. Put it all together
7. Share
8. Feedback and reflect. (n. p)

The steps lie on a circle, with step eight generating inputs for new ideas and proposals.

3 Possible Role of Digital Storytelling in Transforming Education

Although it often is regarded as especially useful in lessons such as language and arts, digital storytelling can be integrated in curricula across various subjects. In higher education, the practice of digital storytelling is applied across various disciplines, such as, history; literacy/English second language studies; knowledge management; community planning; psychology; gender studies; social and cultural history; and business and leadership (Benick, cited in Daskolia, Kynigos & Makri, 2015).

When digital storytelling is implemented in education, students get the opportunity to be actively engaged as creators. They create original products that they share with their peers and the broader community, enabling them to interact with various audiences and obtain feedback from these sources.

■ Reference Debmann (2015) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

According to Debmann (2015), most digital storytelling research studies are of a qualitative nature, carefully describing the gradual development of activities among individuals or groups of participants. By triangulating data collected about students, their competencies; observations of their development of new literacies; and the production of projects, it may be possible to reveal changes in participants.

Savva (2015) summarises eight ways in which digital storytelling may transform learning, based on a number of empirical studies (both qualitative and quantitative) conducted during the last decade.

3.1 *Enhancing 21st Century Literacies*

Educators are required to design and deliver curricula that engage students in learning experiences that prepare them for a multicultural, multimedia world. In adhering to the required steps in creating digital stories, students develop an understanding of a number of essential literacies such as media, visual, global and digital literacy. They experience how to meaningfully employ literacies that empower them as learners in a postmodern era (Savva, 2015).

3.2 *Critical Thinking and Deep Learning*

It has been found that digital storytelling advances students' critical thinking and deep learning. When exploring a topic for creating digital stories, students use higher level thinking skills, for instance, to evaluate evidence and undertaking editing and curation. They further consult relevant sources by exploring various databases and combine tools in meaningful ways to create their artefacts. Deep learning is enhanced because students grasp core academic content from the curriculum and learn to solve complex problems that they encounter in producing their digital story.

3.3 *Academic Achievement and Student Outcomes*

Digital storytelling, in general, impacts positively on students' academic performance. It is particularly effective in language learning since it enhances students' writing, communication and listening comprehension skills (Savva, 2015).

Students regarded as reluctant readers and writers often struggle with literacy (Lynch, 2018). Traditional literacy centres are focused around reading and writing, but digital technology expanded the concept of literacy to include additional literacies such as visual, media and information literacy. Lynch (2018) advises that digital storytelling may assist teachers in "capturing the hearts" of struggling learners. By incorporating suitable apps into their teaching, teachers may engender enthusiasm for storytelling among struggling learners, which, in turn, may improve their writing and reading skills.

3.4 *Student Engagement and Motivation*

As is evident above, the use of digital media and other tools in creating digital stories typically enhances student engagement and motivation. Students often experience digital storytelling as being constructive because they need to actively participate and complete different tasks. When students learn how to use appropriate resources and editing tools, this increases their engagement since they realise the potential benefits of these skills (Savva, 2015). Vivitsou *et al.* (2017) highlight increased engagement in a particular topic as a particularly prominent feature of digital storytelling.

3.5 *Student Creativity and Individuality*

One of the essential ways in which digital storytelling transforms student learning is the creative use of technology. In their role as creators, students select their own topic and create their digital story from the outset, using numerous tools such as applications and other software. They express themselves in various ways, including photography, designing, writing and presenting their story. Students are empowered and build confidence when they use their own voices. They foster a sense of individuality and establish their own identity in creating their stories (Savva, 2015).

3.6 *Collaborative Project-Based Learning*

Digital storytelling may promote collaborative work among students. They develop team spirit and leadership by creating their digital stories in groups. They further develop social skills in organising their ideas and learn to manage their time while engaging with digital content. They learn to interact as part of an engaged community of learners (Savva, 2015). Vivitsou *et al.* (2017) add

that digital storytelling supports active participation, collaborative learning and creativity. The distinction between student and teacher becomes even less pronounced because both fulfil the role of learners.

3.7 *Alternative form of Assessment*

Digital storytelling holds transformational potential, since it offers an alternative method of assessment. It could be used for formative instead of summative assessment (typically focusing on quantifiable skills and scores by means of a test or essay). In digital storytelling, students compile a meaningful piece of work, how they understood the content that they learned, reflecting some of their competencies.

3.8 *Personalised and Authentic Learning Experiences*

Students interact with authentic scenarios during digital storytelling. Since it accommodates their personal learning styles and background experiences, it may enhance their experienced value of teaching. Digital storytelling further accommodates student diversity that, for instance, results from cultural and linguistic differences (Gachago, Bozalek & Ng'ambi, 2018; Savva, 2015).

4 Web 2.0 Storytelling

■ Reference Crawford and Smith (2013) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

According to Crawford and Smith (2013), the digital age led to a whole new range of storytelling options. Web 2.0 technologies, for instance, offer more nuanced possibilities for both the "form and configuration" (Rebmann, 2012, p. 30) of digital storytelling. Software, such as *PhotoStory*, *MovieMaker* and *iMovie* were long considered to be popular platforms for digital storytelling. The development of Web 2.0 technologies, however, changed the scope of digital storytelling design and production with access to a new range of freely available software and venues for developing and sharing productions. Web 2.0 adds new production practices to digital storytelling, where the technologies can interact with each other in powerful ways (Alexander & Levine, 2008).

In terms of new configurations in producing digital stories, collaborative digital storytelling enables multiple authors to work together on building stories or narratives. The focus, often, is on studying collaborative practices (mostly between adults and youths) in understanding and improving learning processes. These collaborative digital stories may particularly support learning and development, since participants learn from each other as they engage in new practices and master existing practices (Hayes & Matusov, as cited in Rebmann, 2012, p. 32).

Rebmann (2012) recommends Levine's website, 50+ *web ways to tell a story*, as a useful place to start when planning a digital storytelling project. Levine (as cited in Rebmann, 2012) reviews applications suitable for web-based storytelling, such as VoiceThread (n.d.). The site includes various other resources.

Crawford and Smith (2013) suggest investigating free, internet-based options that allow users to collect various types of textual and multimedia items; compile them into a digital story; publish it on-line and embed it in spaces where it can be accessed via the internet. For instance, with CAST UDL Book Builder (n.d.), an individual or a group of students can create, publish and share digital books and with Bookemon.com (n.d.) it is possible to create one's own electronic book and save it, free of charge.

Creating digital storytelling products, in the form of comic book-style graphic representations with some textual information, presents a fairly new skill. With Chogger's comic-builder interface, students across various ages and their teachers can create comic-based products in telling a story. At Toondoo users can, for instance, create comic-style digital stories; make a *ToonBook*; and add drawing touches.

As Crawford and Smith (2014) point out, the abundance of digital storytelling resources complicates the process of exhaustively analysing the options available in mobile application storytelling environments. They mention the following applications that are still available: *30hands starter* (n.d.) is a cheaply available mobile application for easily creating digital stories that integrates images and also allows users to add drawings; SonicPics (n.d.) is a low-cost mobile application option for developing storytelling products by using photographs and audio-based storytelling tools, which are then produced into slideshow movie products; another low-cost storytelling mobile application is Storyrobe (n. d.), which enables users to create storytelling products that include images and audio narration, then being able to share the products through *YouTube* or via e-mail; and Story Kit (n.d.) is a free, all-in-one digital storytelling application, which allows users to add images; simple drawings and textual displays; and to include audio recording.

5 Mobile Application Digital Storytelling Model

There are numerous ways to present the processes involved in digital storytelling (Woessner, as cited in Crawford & Smith, 2014). An interesting angle may be to consider the recursive nature of the digital-storytelling process in learning environments. This approach reflects the sustained engagement by both teachers and students throughout the digital-storytelling process, where

new information is continually created, or information arranged in new ways that convey students' understanding of the subject matter and also involve the global community processes involved in sharing digital stories. Crawford and Smith (2014) offer a model that they believe articulates and embraces the importance of the mobile application digital-storytelling process (see Figure 8.1):

The central five-circle circular information system frames the storytelling processes as well as required tools, namely content area knowledge; digital media (irrespective of whether they are created or found); processes involved in developing the digital storytelling product; the particular development environment; and real-world community publication processes involving personal recognition of a digital storytelling product; peer review in the learning environment; and review and evaluation by the global community.

Three comprehensive focus areas provide the broader contexts that frame the initial digital storytelling process:

> Critical thinking is closely involved in all digital storytelling product design and development processes.
>
> Social media and community directly impact all previously indicated areas and relationship and engagement processes are especially important.

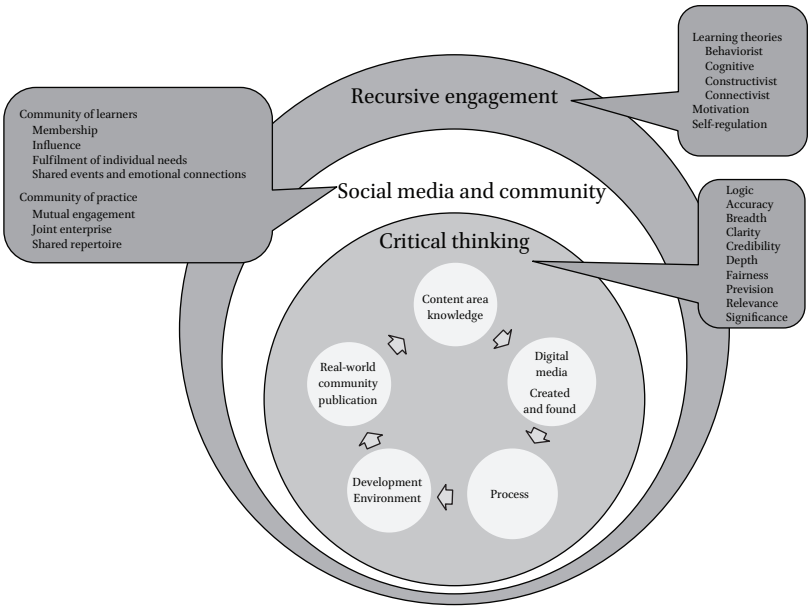

FIGURE 8.1 Storytelling model within the instructional environment (adapted from Crawford & Smith, 2014, p. 24)

> The repeated engagement that takes place in a learning environment provides an overarching consideration, impacting on students' motivation levels and their self-regulation, the learning community and the teacher. It also reflects the learning theories that may guide the whole process and the learning objectives that guide the teaching event.

All in all, digital storytelling offers possibilities for implementing innovative teaching and learning practices. A key research finding is that it enhances students' development of essential 21st-century literacy competencies, the so-called 4Cs of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. Digital storytelling also supports a deeper comprehension of all areas of the curriculum (Savva, 2015). According to Rebmann (2012), the relationship between digital storytelling and multiple literacies is well-established. She points out that digital storytelling projects can easily be integrated into curricula supporting the development of 21st century literacies.

Savva (2015) suggests further investigation to establish a more holistic picture of the impact of digital storytelling in education. It may, for instance, be particularly useful in an open distance learning (ODeL) context, which is often characterised by student diversity and resource-scarce environments.

6 Incorporation of Digital Storytelling in Curricula in Developing Countries

It is evident that digital storytelling is a versatile pedagogical tool that can be used across disciplines and with students of various ages. In their research, Daskolia *et al.* (2015) set the requirement that primary school students should create their digital stories with inexpensive, readily available technology tools. They eventually selected Windows Movie Maker as a low-cost and user-friendly option. If digital storytelling can be applied with primary school students and with low-cost and user-friendly tools, it should offer possibilities for enhancing digital literacies across the spectrum of educational levels.

Crawford and Smith (2014) further point to *Educause*'s futuristic view of digital storytelling, namely, that if it were to become an important element in higher education, it should offer possibilities that other tools do not sufficiently provide, such as, effectively incorporating technology in learning; establishing emotional ties with content; and the ability to easily share content.

Digital storytelling often incorporates stories, with personal content, which are told in the first person, with the voice of an individual student. It, however, is also suited to more content-based stories. Content-based digital stories

may be particularly suitable for teaching students from non-traditional educational backgrounds who find academic literacy challenging. It is also suitable for students who are not interested in classroom learning and struggle with traditional assignments (Gumble, as cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014). Digital storytelling offers the possibility for fostering student engagement, critical reflection, authentic learning and acquisition of a wide range of digital literacies in a higher-education environment (Barrett, cited in Gachago, *et al.*, 2014).

Gachago *et al.* (2014) point out that most studies on digital storytelling are based on conditions in digitally-rich contexts, in which software programmes and technologies are used that are not accessible to students in resource-poor environments. A number of the sources consulted also pointed out that digital storytelling appears to be an essential approach in an educational context where digital natives (the "technologically savvy" generation of students who grew up with technology) are commonly found.

Bennett, Maton and Kervin (cited in Ungerer, 2012), however, point out that the unique characteristics ascribed to digital natives do not necessarily correspond to all young peoples' computer use and skills. Factors, such as, socioeconomic status; cultural/ethnic backgrounds; and gender may lead to differences in students' technological expertise. Ungerer (2012) further advises that generalisations about the characteristics of a particular generation of students may not sufficiently describe the qualities of a typically diverse student body in an open distance learning (ODL) environment.

Digital storytelling appears to be particularly useful in establishing "21st century literacy", including academic literacy, technology literacy, visual literacy and information literacy (Robin, 2008). The question may be raised whether the possibilities for transforming education such as these that are evident from the literature would also apply to developing countries that typically are not be regarded as digitally saturated contexts. Can digital storytelling support the development of digital literacies in this context?

It may be worthwhile investigating how digital storytelling can contribute to innovative teaching and learning practices in developing countries, particularly since Gachago *et al.* (2014) suggest that the availability of free software programmes for video production and the ubiquity of mobile technologies make complex technology projects such as digital storytelling practicable in resource – poor environments. They suggest that digital storytelling may be applied across various disciplines, including diverse student groups varying in terms of digital literacy, providing that technical barriers be removed as far as possible and that freely available technologies are used or technologies students own or can easily access.

Additional, essential considerations may feature when incorporating digital storytelling in higher education contexts in emerging countries that often are characterised as resource-poor environments. Digital storytelling may offer innovative opportunities for enhancing digital literacies in an ODL context, of which the University of South Africa (Unisa, 2018) serves as an example.

Unisa, the largest university in Africa, delivers about a third of all graduates in South Africa. It has more than 300,000 students in 130 countries globally, and is one of the world's mega universities. Unisa is a dedicated open distance education institution that follows an ODeL approach. This student-centred approach aims to provide students with flexibility in their choices about learning, for instance, when, where, and how they learn, which, typically, includes extensive student support.

According to the university's curriculum policy (Unisa, 2018), the concept of *graduateness* describes the combination of learning outcomes and attributes that students should have acquired when successfully completing their qualifications. Unisa gives its views on graduateness in its statement on graduate attributes, including that its graduates have unique attributes because they successfully completed their studies in an ODeL context. Some of the qualities mentioned in this statement, which digital storytelling may particularly enhance, are that graduates are able to critically analyse and evaluate the credibility and usefulness of information and data from multiple sources in a globalised world with its ever-increasing information and data flows and competing worldviews and that they know how to apply their discipline-specific knowledge competently, ethically and creatively to solve real-life problems. New and freely available software programmes increasingly empower people to not only consume digital media, but also create it (Burgess, cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014), pointing to the possible use of digital storytelling in an ODeL environment to achieve the above outcomes.

7 Digital Storytelling in Resource-Poor Environments

Gachago *et al.* (2014) point out the challenge in integrating information and communications technologies (ICTs) in curricula in such a way that it benefits digitally literate students but also allows students with lower digital literacy skills to develop in a meaningful manner. The complexities involved in introducing digital storytelling in higher education; the effort in supporting students with diverse levels of digital literacy; and their varied access to technologies may prohibit its introduction in resource-poor environments.

A small but growing field of knowledge on the use of digital storytelling in resource-poor environments may, however, guide efforts in this field. Examples of studies of digital storytelling in resource-poor environments that focus on development include those by Reitmaier, Bidwell and Marsden's (as cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014) ethnographic research investigating the development of mobile digital storytelling applications for rural communities in South African and Kenya; Tacchi's (as cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014); and *Project Aracati* that focuses on collecting and disseminating digital stories among marginalised Brazilian youth (Clarke, as cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014).

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (in South Africa) investigated the possibilities that digital storytelling offers in an educational context, including the relevance of digital stories in dealing with diversity issues among pre-service teachers (Condy, Chigona, Gachago & Ivala, cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014) and the relationship between digital storytelling and student engagement (Ivala, Chigona, Gachago and Condy, cited in Gachago *et al.*, 2014). According to Gachago *et al.* (2014), these studies provide an initial indication of the viability of digital storytelling in resource-poor, marginalised environments, providing that local social networks; social practices and cultural contexts are constantly considered.

Gachago *et al.* (2014) investigated students' perceptions of digital storytelling across four disciplines. They also investigated the suitability of particular digital storytelling practices for incorporating them in curricula in a resource-poor environment, across disciplines and with a diverse student body. They piloted different approaches to implementing digital storytelling in the light of the diversity of their student body, including computer access; educational readiness; courses, disciplines and levels of study; and students' digital literacies.

Gachago *et al.* (2014) found that there still is highly inequitable access to, what they term, economic, cultural and social capital among their students. Such deficiencies highlight the need to offer adequate support and access to facilities to students with lower digital literacies and limited access to computers, and also to circumvent feelings of isolation, vulnerability and disempowerment.

Since mobile phones enable student to take pictures and videos, Gachago *et al.* (2014) found these devices to be particularly useful in students' digital storytelling practices. They recommend investigating the possibility of developing a comprehensive mobile solution for producing digital stories because of the ubiquity of mobile phones among students in resource-poor environments.

8 Conclusion

Digital storytelling allows for a supportive process of acquiring digital literacies, where students engage with various technological tools as required. Students, therefore, use and learn about tools in achieving a real educational purpose, pointing to the mindful integration of technology in teaching.

Digital storytelling may offer possibilities for enhancing various types of literacy in resource-poor environments. Although it may require considerable creativity and persistence, it is essential that the possibilities that digital storytelling holds for an ODeL context should be investigated further, including investigating the use of mobile phones in digital storytelling and which applications would be especially suitable in a particular environment.

A concern, however, may be the professional development of academic staff members. It is advisable that digital storytelling should not be approached in an indiscriminate manner and that teachers should plan for this process. They also have to provide some type of scaffolding to guide students during digital storytelling. The basic technological knowledge academic staff members require to be comfortable in guiding the digital storytelling process should initially be determined. And, digital storytelling has to be incorporated in a pedagogically sound manner in curricula.

Finally, in a diverse ODeL context, an essential initial step would be determining whether the majority of students have access to mobile phones and whether this access is supported by internet access. It is evident that digital storytelling is an effective tool for enhancing student engagement and supporting the development of new literacies. It may be worthwhile investigating whether this approach can be applied in a cost-efficient manner in resource-poor environments, often describing the conditions of students in an ODeL context.

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CHAPTER 9

A New Horizon of Non-Fiction Storytelling: the Use of Virtual Reality and Gaming Techniques

Nina Dvorko

Abstract

Documentary filmmakers have always been at the cutting edge of mastering and using new technologies. Today, in the context of constant technological innovations typical for the digital era, documentary storytellers aim to exploit the affordances of digital media for telling non-fiction stories. This chapter, out of the variety of innovations and experiments in the field of digital documentary storytelling, is focused on those that employ immersive and gaming techniques. The first part is devoted to virtual reality as a powerful storytelling method, which provides an incredible and immersive experience for the audiences and users. The second part deals with innovations and possibilities, which have recently emerged at the intersection of non-fiction storytelling and game.

Key Words

Non-fiction storytelling – digital media – interactive documentary – immersive experience – virtual reality – documentary games – education

• • •

1 Introduction

In the 80s, I got into documentary as a sound designer determined to use sound as a powerful storytelling tool, capable of immersing the viewer into the movie world. The technical limitations at the time made it more complicated, if not impossible, to create an illusion that the viewer is personally present in the space of the screen action, in which sound and image function simultaneously.

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The introduction of digital technology had a profound influence on documentary-making. It has not only enhanced the creative potential of the non-fiction storyteller (*i.e.*, documentary filmmaker), who has absolute control over the narrative discourse of the linear conventional documentary film, but also opened up opportunities for the development of a new mode of non-fiction storytelling, interactive documentary, which provides for the active participation of the viewer/user in the unfolding of the narrative beyond the mental act of interpretation.

According to Sandra Gaudenzi (expert in interactive factual narrative), "Interactive documentaries are digital non-linear narratives that use new media to relate and describe reality" (2013, p. 10). Gaudenzi (2013) states that:

> The cut is replaced by the hyperlink which immediately splits one form into multiple possible forms. The cut, that allowed the creation of meaning by establishing a fixed chain of events, is now an opening to possibilities where the intentionality of the author is replaced by a dialogue between the user and the possibilities that the interactive documentary system offers. (p. 13)

Although the beginning of interactive documentary is associated with the creation of the *Aspen movie map* project (1980),[1] the explosion of the Web (especially Web 2.0's social and participative nature) in the last few years has intensified the experimental activity with the new form of non-fiction storytelling and has "dramatically increased the number and the variety of documentary artefacts" (Gaudenzi, 2013, p. 10).

In the late 90s, I engaged myself in the emerging field of interactive digital narrative (primary non-fiction), aiming to learn, as well as many other researchers and practitioners, how to use the affordances of the new media for the new form of narrative creation.

The actively developing field of interactive documentaries is represented by various experimental approaches (O'Flynn, 2012, pp. 141–157) to the use of interactive digital technologies in the "creative treatment of actuality" (Grierson, 1933, p. 8). This is particularly relevant to web-based documentary forms. Their spectrum includes non-linear films with various narrative structures; database

1 The *Aspen movie map* project is often referred to as the first attempt to digitally document an experience, however, with the production of *Moss landing* (Apple Multimedia Lab, 1989) the term interactive documentary comes into use.

documentaries; participatory documentaries; transmedia documentaries; and location-based documentaries with the use of mobile technology.

Clever use of interactive technology and web environment opportunities are making non-fiction storytelling more immersive and enhancing audience engagement. However, it is virtual reality that possesses the most immersive technologies.

The latest achievements in the field of new virtual reality technologies (as, for example, the virtual reality headset with improved display resolution) allow the viewer to be placed in the epicenter of the narrated event by means of the cinematic VR (360-degree video, either monoscopic or stereoscopic, with spatial audio) or virtual reality (VR, computer-generated and often interactive). In the late 80s, it was difficult for me to even imagine such possibilities of documentary storytelling.

VR is ideally suited to games. Although the majority of successful experiments in the field of documentary games are yet to be associated with digital artefacts, which were not designed with the use of head-mounted display technology, it is just a matter of time for the combination of a documentary film with a gaming experience to be an effective immersion tool.

2 Immersive Documentary Storytelling with Virtual Reality

In simple terms, VR can be considered as an immersive experience in which one's head movements are tracked in a three-dimensional world. It is achieved by combining computing power and optics in order to stimulate a visual and auditory experience, which is aimed at tricking the user into believing they are someplace else.

Immersion is one of the key media characteristics which, according to Sherman and Craig (2003), can be applied in two ways; mental immersion and physical immersion. In consideration of most media, "'being immersed' generally refers to an emotional or mental state a feeling of being involved in the experience" (p. 9). Immersion into virtual reality is a perception of being physically present in a non-physical world. In VR video and VR documentary, based on computer-generated content, the degree of immersion experienced by the users, can be high due to physical (or sensory) immersion.

Editorial lead for *Taster* (n. d.), the home of new and innovative ideas at the BBC and its partners, Will Saunders, believes that,

> Virtual reality and the world of immersive video is the latest place where we're seeing the convergence of new technologies with new forms of

storytelling. It is a fascinating, nascent and constantly evolving space. (2016, n. p.)

3 360° VR Video as a Storytelling Medium

Unlike traditional documentary films, in 360° video (also called VR video) the recipient is placed inside the story with the help of spatial audio[2] and 360° video, having an illusion of being in a different world. This sense of being physically there is achieved through the use of a VR headset, which visually separates viewers from the space they are physically occupying.

One of the creators of 360° immersive films defined virtual reality as the "ultimate empathy machine" (Milk, 2015, n. p.). His 360° VR documentary *Clouds over Sidra* (Arora & Milk, directors, 2015), made with support from the UN, is a vivid example of a perfect wedding between a non-fictional narrative and VR technologies. It is a story of a 12-year-old Syrian girl Sidra, who has been living with her family in a Jordanian refugee camp for the last 18 months.

I experienced the 360-degree stereoscopic[3] movie *Clouds over Sidra* via my smartphone with Homido VR headset, in 2015. My first impression was the feeling of really being there. I was taken close to the situation, following Sidra as she leads her everyday life in the camp. Being immersed in the story epicenter, I sympathised with the main character and with what was happening around me. When I suggested that my husband, Sergey, a documentary cameraman-director experienced in traditional documentary filmmaking, should watch the film, he eagerly agreed, although he considered new immersive technologies a threat to authored documentaries. Sergey was impressed by its intimacy and the ability to transport the viewer anywhere. However, he, alongside some other traditional filmmakers, expressed doubts regarding the possibility of a widespread use of the new medium for storytelling.

The topic "Filmmaking in 360 VR video" raises many questions, such as: How to create meaningful and memorable experiences for virtual reality video, if during playback the viewer has control of the viewing direction? How to use the affordances of the new medium for storytelling? How to plan for and film the immersive video that is fed into the VR experience? How to draw

2 Spatial audio gives the listener the impression of a sound source within a three-dimensional environment. In 360-degree video, this helps to produce the illusion of actually being at the source of the video stream.

3 Stereoscopic video can add another level of immersion by adding an illusion of depth to a flat image in comparison with monoscopic video.

the audience's attention to the main narrative elements of the shot? There are more questions than answers. Here is what Chris Milk has to say in this regard, "How do I narrate in VR? This is the question I ask myself a hundred times a day" (z-news.xyz [website], 2016).

Directors who make films with the use of VR technology are only beginning to discover the specifics of storytelling in the new context. 360° video has forced filmmakers to think of their visual storytelling differently, compared to traditional film. Phil Nottingham argues that "Instead of controlling the viewpoint of the audience, you must build an environment that encourages exploration and allows a story to emerge through a process of user-driven discovery" (2016, n. p.). He believes that 360° video "is, compositionally, more like theater than film" (Nottingham, 2016, n. p.). In order to tell a story, the director must think "of each shot scenographically, *e.g.,* the way in which visual elements throughout the environment can contribute to the storytelling" (Nottingham, 2016, n. p.).

Camera placement in the scene is the key to storytelling. To capture the action of the scene, the director needs to consider what role the person wearing the VR headset will take. More immersive are those 360 VR videos in which the viewer is the hero. However, he or she can only look around, without moving.

I cannot fail to mention the fact that audio and sound design is also a key component of this new video format. Spatialised audio not only enhances the sense of presence, but also plays a new role in VR, guiding the direction of the viewer's gaze. When the audience is in control of directing their view and changing perspective at will, the key to success is encouraging them to look at the things you want them to see. To a large extent, this can be achieved by means of sound. For example, when the viewer turns his or her head in the right direction, a certain dialogue starts or certain music is introduced. As well as sound effects, light patterns and actors' gazes, for example, can be clues pointing at the right direction.

The development of 360° video technologies brought about a series of creative experiments. A few examples, from many, include a virtual reality news documentary from The New York Times (NYT VR, n. d.); 360° video from the BBC (n. d.); and 360° video from the leading VR company *Within* (*n.d.*)[4] (see Arora & Milk, 2015).

The finished projects show that telling stories in 360° VR video is quite a different skill-set to master. Language for storytelling in this medium is only

4 *Within* is a leading VR company, founded by director Chris Milk and technologist Aaron Koblin, whose mission is to tell extraordinary stories in virtual reality (http://with.in/).

being developed; however, many filmmakers, documentarists and journalists have lain serious groundwork for that.

4 Virtual Reality Documentary

In contrast to 360° VR video, VR documentary, based on computer generated content, has many more possibilities for user's involvement. VR, as a medium, is a highly developed form of computer modelling, which helps the user to immerse into the virtual world and act in it directly through special sensory devices.

In this respect, I would like to mention the work of immersive journalism called *Project Syria* (de la Peña, director, 2014), a virtual reality documentary directed by an American journalist, highlighting the difficult life of displaced Syrians, which is a vivid example of integrating virtual reality into journalistic storytelling.

In this two-part experience, Nonny de la Peña mixes traditional journalism with immersive gaming technology. In the first scene, the viewer is placed in a busy street corner in the Aleppo district of Syria, witnessing terror unfold (a rocket explosion). To create a realistic scene, Nonny de la Peña and her team use actual audio, video and photographs. In the second scene, the viewer finds themself in the centre of a refugee camp and can watch it grow exponentially, with more and more refugees arriving from Syria.

There are many other examples of immersive VR documentaries, not related to journalists' tasks, such as, for example, project *Tree* (Zec & Porter, directors, 2017), the critically acclaimed and haptically enhanced virtual reality experience. This is what the creators (n.d.) tell about their project on the official website:

> A virtual-reality project transforms you into a rainforest tree. With your arms as branches and your body as the trunk, you'll experience the tree's growth from a seedling into its fullest form and witness its fate firsthand. (n. p.).

Interactivity is an important characteristic of virtual reality. However, immersion into the narrative and interactivity are often considered to be incompatible, rather than coherent, qualities. This is why most VR documentaries display pronounced interactive features in terms of spatial research and physical-object manipulation, but are much less interactive about the story itself.

5 Documentary Games

Video games or computer games are highly attractive to the young generations, who are born into digital media. There is a good reason why, in recent years, digital documentary storytellers have experimented more extensively with various ways of combining non-fiction storytelling and gameplay as, "the formalized interaction that occurs when players follow the rules of a game and experience its system though play" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 303).

The works which has been created over the past few years show an evolution in the practice of documentary game making.

A good example of employing gaming discourse is *Fort McMoney* (Dufresne, director, 2013), web documentary and strategy video game created by French journalist and web documentary director, David Dufresne.

Fort McMoney is set in the city of Fort McMurrey in the Canadian province Alberta, home of Canada's largest oil reserves. *Fort McMoney* not only covers the problem at the heart of Canadian oil industry from different perspectives, but also gives the gamers an opportunity to take a walk through the city, recreated as a virtual environment, to make acquaintances among its real personalities from different social strata and spheres of activity, for instance, asking them questions. The variety of interviews (with homeless people; strip clubs managers; the city's mayor and owners of oil companies) helps the users better understand the scale of complexity of balance between economic development and ecological catastrophe, with numerous nuances that influence the development of the region.

Fort McMoney presents a strong documentary quality through the use of such traditional documentary elements as recorded video, photo and audio objects. The way Dufrense uses methods and tools of web documentary is based on his experience of creating the *Prison Valley* (Dufresne & Brault, directors, *2009*) project.

The project makes good use of interactive game elements. Every week gamers can vote at referendums and surveys, therefore shaping the course of play. They can also take part in the discussion and try to convert other players to influence the development of the town.

For me, a person well familiar with many interactive web projects, *Fort McMoney* was particularly interesting as a synthesis of web-documentary and gaming process. I found it to be a really rich viewer experience. As for my students, who like playing video games, they considered this form of documentary game to be attractive and useful, since it allowed them to comprehend the situation in the town of Fort McMurray as well as the oil industry in Canada.

By participating in referendum voting, they delved into the democratic process. Undoubtedly, interactive documentary, similar to *Fort McMoney,* can be a powerful educational tool.

In this regard, among innovative experiences bordering on gaming and documentary storytelling, I would like to draw particular attention to such projects as *Never alone* (Upper One Games, 2015), an atmospheric puzzle platformer with built-in documentary and *Heart of the Arctic* (Tendril, 2013) an immersive digital experience, which uses animation in combination with recorded video, photos and gameplay. These projects include all activities that emphasise the active role of the learner in creating knowledge.

6 Conclusion

Within the last several years, digital non-fiction storytelling took a significant step forward with first the web technologies and social media, then mobile devices and locative media and now virtual reality and gaming techniques. Forms of digital storytelling, described in this chapter, such as, 360° video; VR documentary; and documentary games, enable documentary filmmakers to explore other ways of non-fiction representation. Being new storytelling forms, they are still developing language and grammar. Therefore, there are still so many questions to answer and so many topics to discuss.

However, we can already state that virtual reality and gaming technologies are powerful immersive storytelling tools, with a potential yet to be fully explored. In the course of their expansion and evolution, they will attract documentary filmmakers eager to experiment with new possibilities of digital media to provide an in-depth experience and a richer user engagement.

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CHAPTER 10

Visual Storytelling of *Japaneseness* in Manga, Anime and Japanese Film

Shunichi Ueno

Abstract

What is *Japaneseness*? Manga, anime and Japanese films have become one of the most popular visual storytelling mediums in the world. Most critics and researchers have come to a common consensus about the Japaneseness of the artistic techniques: *aspect-to-aspect transition*, *limited animation* and *pillow shot*. Japanese manga artists convey the entire picture through aspect-to-aspect transitions. Japanese anime makers still use limited animation. From Ozu's pillow shots, Japanese audiences participate in the play of space and time to decipher and understand the environment in *Tokyo story*. The question is why are the expressions in manga, anime and Japanese films limited or elliptical? Manga, anime and Japanese films are considered to be a *kamishibai* or traditional Japanese visual storytelling in a new medium, because creators are to provide a clue or a stimulus for another moment to occur, activating a kind of creative switching station in the audience's minds. In conclusion, as Japanese visual storytelling, such as manga, anime and Japanese films considers the viewers, this empathy gives birth to Japanese works of art that are limited. Foreign audiences often do not understand this simplicity and elimination, so subsequently categorise these aspects as Japaneseness.

Key Words

Japaneseness – manga – anime – Japanese films – limited animation – the pillow shot – aspect-to-aspect transition – reading formation – *kamishibai* – *Tokyo Story*

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1 What is *Manga Grammar*?: Aspect-to-Aspect Transition

Manga are Japanese comic books that have gradually become a global popular culture. Because of the simple style of these comic books, there is more room

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for the readers to complete the details of the iconic characters and even give them life. Consequently, every character becomes a piece of the reader. In particular, it is the simpler style of manga "that separates manga from the comic books of other nations (Ellington, 2009, p. 310).

■ Please check the unpaired quotation in this sentences.

McCloud (1994) writes, in his *Understanding comics*, about space in the cartoon as follows:

> The cartoon is a vacuum into which our identity and awareness are pulled … an empty shell that we inhabit which enables us to travel in another realm. We don't just observe the cartoon, we become it. (p. 36)

He continues that:

> Storytellers in all media know that a sure indicator of audience involvement is the degree to which the audience identifies with a story's characters. And since viewer-identification is a specialty of cartooning, cartoons have historically held an advantage in breaking into world popular culture. (p. 42)

Both cartoonists and manga artists have explored some of the processes underlying audience involvement. McCloud, in his analysis, examined the audience attraction mechanisms in cartoons and manga. As a cartoonist, McCloud stated that it was critical to understand better the audience's involvement with visual storytelling formats. He outlined six types of panel transitions: moment-to-moment, action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect and *non sequitur* (pp. 70–74). This analysis found that the most common transition type in United States and European comics was action-to-action transition, which concisely and efficiently allows the reader to know what the character is doing. However, McCloud's (1994) examination revealed that Japanese manga uses many aspect-to-aspect transitions:

> Aspect-to-aspect transitions have been an integral part of manga almost from the very beginning. Most often used to establish a mood or a sense of place, time seems to stand still in these quiet, contemplative combinations. Rather than acting as a bridge between separate moments, the reader here must assemble a single moment using scattered fragments. (p. 79)

Of course, there have been some contrary, dissenting arguments. Petersen (2011), for example, wrote that McCloud's *Understanding comics* "has been

faulted for his grandiose theories of art and his sweeping generalizations and is more akin to manifesto than a history or an essay on theory" (p. 224–226). And Shamoon (2011) claimed that McCloud "mistakenly attributes the aspect-to-aspect transition to a legacy from classical Japanese art [through his] small survey" (p. 24). However, it is axiomatic that manga uses the aspect-to-aspect transition frequently and McCloud, unlike these manga critics, is wise to avoid a hasty conclusion that the aspect-to-aspect transition "creates a visual rhyme" and "functions as a kind of visual poetry", which were some of Shamoon's main arguments (2011, p. 32).

In *Understanding comics*, McCloud's own comic avatar appears in a Japanese-style garden and thinks about the differences in transitions between manga and comics:

> I believe there's something a bit more fundamental to this particular East/West split. Traditional western art and literature doesn't wander much. On the whole, we're a pretty goal-oriented culture. But in the East, there's a rich tradition of cyclical and labyrinthine works of art. Japanese comics may be heirs to this tradition, in the way they so often emphasize being there over getting there. Through these and other storytelling techniques, the Japanese offer a vision of comics very different from our own. For in Japan, more than anywhere else, comics are an art of intervals.
>
> McCloud, 1994, p. 81

Here, while wandering through the Japanese garden, McCloud ponders the particular East/West split. Totally absorbed in the problem, McCloud is oblivious to the atmosphere and circumstances in the Japanese garden. He assumes an attitude of complete indifference towards the Japanese garden even when thinking about Japanese culture. He is totally self-absorbed and pays attention to nothing else because he is a goal-oriented person. As an obvious result, he has deviated considerably. First, when he was about to cross the bridge in the Japanese garden, he should have stopped and looked around. Moreover, he should have felt the warmness or coldness, the soft rays of the sun and the path of the wind and should have noticed the cherry blossom petals and their soft shade of pink, the birds, frogs, insects and the babbling of the brook. The Japanese garden, or a miniature garden, gives us the metacognitive ability to realise that all things (not just living things) on our globe depend on one another for survival.

The Japaneseness comes from the concept that literally everything in front of the reader/viewer interacts as the parts of a whole as the situation changes every moment. Japanese cartoonists let the readers see the whole

picture through their use of aspect-to-aspect transitions. Although time seems to stand still in these quiet, contemplative combinations, the aspect-to-aspect transition frames give full scope to the Japanese readers' imagination. For Japanese readers, the subtle movement of the characters is very important as every movement interacts and builds a changing whole, moment by moment.

As Bennett and Woollacott (1987) argued, the best way to understand the relationship between texts and their audiences is by *reading formations*:

> It refers, specifically, to the inter-textual relations which prevail in a specific context, thereby activating a given body of texts by ordering the relations between them in a specific way such that their reading is always-already cued in specific directions. (p. 64)

Obviously, an understanding of the relationship between the text and the reader is based on ideological and cultural reading formations, and "concerns surrounding both have great relevance to the transfer of texts from one culture to another" (Miller, 2000, p. 12). For instance, the aspectual transition that uses static images of the scenery, such as the pillow shots in Japanese films, "has symbolic value but does not move the plot forward" (Shamoon, 2011, p. 25) for readers of the Western comic cultures. However, for Japanese readers and audiences, the aspect-to-aspect transition in manga and the pillow shots in Japanese films do move the plot forward.

Deleuze (1989) explained Ozu's pillow shots and still images showing the movement of time:

> The still life is time, for everything that changes is in time, but time does not itself change, it could itself change only in another time, indefinitely … Ozu's still lifes endure, have a duration, over ten seconds of the vase: this duration of the vase is precisely the representation of that which endures, through the succession of changing states … the still lifes are the pure and direct images of time … Time is the full, that is, the unalterable form filled by change. (p. 17)

If Deleuze considered the reading formations between Ozu's films and Japanese audiences, he would realise the reason for the time duration in the pillow shot. Japanese audiences do not remain idle spectators as the time allows them to exercise their imagination; so, the audience is actively involved in deciphering the picture. This is known as *e-toki* in Japanese visual-storytelling history, in which a Buddhist monk used static pictures to narrate stories of Buddhism.

2 The Environment vs. the Focal Character

Nisbett (2003), a social psychologist at the University of Michigan, surveyed many psychological experiments for his *The geography of thought: How Asians and Westerners think differently...and why* and found that there were major differences between "Asian" and "Western" modes of thought. However, these results were a foregone conclusion.

> The Western style of thought is characterized as embodying the value of 'independence', while the Eastern style of thought embodies the value of 'interdependence'.
>
> ORTNER, 2003, n. p.

Although this observation does leave some doubt about dividing "the world into these monolithic units of East and West" (Ortner, 2003, n.p.), here we analyse one of these studies in slightly more depth to compare and contrast manga and cartoons. In the fish-tank task, the participants looked at a picture of a fish tank for five seconds and then, without looking at the picture, described aloud what they had seen in the fish tank. The results were as follows:

> Americans and Japanese made about an equal number of references to the focal fish, but the Japanese made more than 60 percent more references to background elements, including the water, rocks, bubbles, and inert plants and animals. Perhaps most tellingly, the very first sentence from the Japanese participants was likely to be one referring to the environment ('It looked like a pond'), whereas the first sentence from Americans was likely to be one referring to the focal fish ('There was a big fish, moving off to the left').
>
> NISBETT, 2003, p. 90

Nisbett (2003) and his colleague Masuda concluded that,

> to the Asian, the world is a complex place, composed of continuous substances, understandable in terms of the whole rather than in terms of the parts, and subject more to collective than to personal control. To the Westerner, the world is a relatively simple place, composed of discrete objects that can be understood without undue attention to context, and highly subject to personal control. (p. 100)

These results verified McCloud's conclusions that American/Western comics tend to emphasise an action-to-action transition featuring a single subject (a

main character), while Japanese readers attempt to collect information about the environment from manga. Japanese cartoonists conform to the readers' expectations using aspect-to-aspect transitions.

3 Anime: Limited Animation

Anime is Japanese animation. Unlike the full animation of Disney or Pixar, there are few lifelike representations in anime, which is known as *limited animation*:

> Limited animation in anime relies on the minimization of movement, the extensive use of still images and unique rhythms of movement and immobility.
>
> STEINBERG, 2012, p. 5

In limited animation, only one part of the image, a character's lips or eyes, move. Osamu Tezuka devised the ultimate limited animation system when making *Tetsuwan atom* (*Astro boy*), the first popular animated Japanese television series, which ran from 1952 to 1968. According to *The encyclopedia of Japanese pop culture* (Schilling, 1997), limited animation saved on animation costs as less cells were used. As a result, this innovation became the standard practice in the Japanese animation industry (Schilling, 1997, p. 266). Because limited animation has become a hallmark of Japanese animation, Japanese anime makers still use this practice today, even though they have significantly larger budgets.

Tezuka, known as "the God of Manga", created more than 150,000 pages of manga drawings and has 600 titles to his credit. He grew up watching classic Disney animations such as *Sleeping beauty*, many Western movies and animated cartoons (Petersen, 2011, 175). In spite of being an admirer of Disney's full animation, he chose to use limited animation.

4 *Kamishibai*: The Immediate Precedent

Kamishibai, which can be traced back to the twelfth century, has deep roots in Japan's pictorial storytelling history. *Kamishibai* literally means *paper play* and was a form of Japanese street theatre and storytelling popular in the 1930s, until the advent of television. *Kamishibai* performers performed on street corners using sets of illustrated boards that were placed in a miniature

stage-like device and changed to accompany the narrated story. These live performances were conducted by a solo performer who rode about on a bicycle and set up the little stage attached to a small case over the rear wheel. The *kamishibai* performers usually used about six to eight pictures for one story, each of which was shown in a frame and revealed one after the other as the stories unfolded (Petersen, 2011, p. 131). In contrast to *kamishibai*, however, using eight cells per second for limited anime creators would give too much information to Japanese audiences. Historically, Tezuka, who devised the limited animation system, was possibly displeased to be known as the inventor who reduced costs, as he only did what any anime creator would have done; so, he wanted to be known as a successor to traditional Japanese visual storytelling and art history.

5 Ozu's Limited Cinema

Tokyo story is a Japanese drama film directed by Yasujiro Ozu in 1953. It has been widely regarded as Ozu's masterpiece and is often cited as one of the greatest films ever made. Ozu's most admired narrative principle was his use of the ellipsis, that is, the omission of plot material or even events. In *Tokyo story*, the viewer becomes aware of the various ellipses, whereby certain plot points are dropped, the dialogue and acting are elided or some important events are ignored. Desser (1997) analysed Ozu's intentions:

> Ozu's strategies are rooted in elements of the Japanese aesthetic tradition—the deemphasis of drama and the elision of plot elements in theatrical works, the emphasis on mood and tone instead of story in literature. (pp. 6–7)

Desser insisted that Ozu skipped those areas that most American films tend to focus on. Similarly, Thomas Caldwell (2008) characterised Ozu's elliptical convention:

> Ozu's desire to ensure that the audience focus on the small nuances of character interaction is apparent by examining what is left out of the film. Despite its importance to the film, the city of Tokyo is barely depicted. There are the occasional establishing shots of industry to distinguish it from the rural setting where the film begins and ends but otherwise the only time the audience really gets to see the city is at the same time as the elderly couple during their brief bus tour. In terms of plot development,

> major turning points that a more narrative driven film would have included are left out. The audience never sees any of the train journeys that the parents take and key events towards the end of the film, for example, Tomi's deathbed, all occur off-screen. (n. p. [blog])

Then, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2004) concluded that,

> the result from the use of space and time in *Tokyo Story* is that the viewer is invited to look at his films in a new way, to participate in a play of space and time. (p. 437)

A fault common to these Western film critics is that they tend to dismiss the Japanese viewers in their analyses, forgetting that manga, anime and Japanese films are primarily designed for those who enjoy Japanese language and culture. While it is true that Ozu's films deemphasise or elide actions, from a Japanese perspective, Ozu is following Japanese visual storytelling traditions and the principle of cinematic spatial construction, which is quite different from Hollywood norms. Ozu endeavours to depict the life stories in *Tokyo story* rather than the mood and tone.

This is reason Ozu uses *pillow shots*, as these allow Japanese audiences to participate in the play of space and time by deciphering the picture. Brief, evocative images from everyday life such as trains, clouds, smoke, clothes hanging on a line, empty streets, small architectural details and banners blowing in the wind are not used as an intermission between scenes but to expand the Japanese audience's imagination. Similar to the aspect-to-aspect transition in manga, pillow shots help Ozu's audiences understand the environment around *Tokyo story*.

6 Who Controls the Story?

Lastly, why are the expressions in manga, anime and Japanese films limited or elliptical? What makes the perpetual subtraction in Ozu's film possible? From Japanese visual storytelling traditions, manga, anime and Japanese films could be considered to be *kamishibai* in a new medium. Along with these traditions, Japanese audiences continue to cultivate "a kind of creative switching station", which is an aesthetic in which the self does not exist but only the "nerves of the author" (Tansman, 2009, p. 43). Therefore, the creator's job is to trust the audience's imagination and to provide a clue or a stimulus for another moment to occur and activate a kind of creative switching station in the audience's minds.

As a result, limited and elliptical works of art have been, and continue to be, produced in Japan.

"The best storyteller does not control the story" (Chénier, 2011): A storyteller has to be a facilitator who seeks to scaffold the stories in the audience's mind. For example, the first image in *The three magic charms* (*Taberareta yamamba*) is recited in strict accordance with the script:

> One day, the young priest picked up chestnuts in the mountain.
> And an old woman springs from a Bush.
> (Taking a falsely nice tone) 'My little one' she said, 'you recognize me? I am your great aunt, the aunt of Dad's sister's husband's sister. Come visit me tonight, I'll cook plenty of chestnuts'. And then she disappeared with a smile in the bush.
>
> MATSUTANI, 1970

This is the same *kamishibai* story performed by Waller (2013):

> Long ago, high up in a mountain village. There was a young boy who spent all his days studying with a very old, very wise monk. The boy took walks through the forest, looking at trees and collecting berries. He never came across anyone on his walks.
>
> But one afternoon, as he was walking along on the mountain road, there was an old lady in his path. She started to look at him and she said, 'Oh, how have you been? It's been such a long time! You've gotten so big and so grown-up. I know your mother and I know your father and I know all of your relatives'. The little boy was very confused. He wasn't sure who this lady was but she seemed so convinced that she knew him. She then invited him to her home in the mountains for dinner that night. He accepted.

These two *kamishibai* recitations exemplify the differences between what is called limited and full storytelling. The ultimate goal of the *kamishibai* narrator is to share the scenes of the story with audiences, without regard to the storyteller or the listener. Storytellers adjust their words to their listeners' response, or make sure that the listener's creative switching station is turned on.

In conclusion, Japanese visual storytelling, such as manga, anime and Japanese films, considers the viewers. This empathy for the audience gives birth to, in some sense, Japanese limited works of art. However, because audiences outside Japan do not understand the reason for the simplicity and/or elimination, these elements are subsequently categorised as Japaneseness.

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PART 3

Healing Perspectives

Introduction to Part 3

Theresa Edlmann

Narratives are about more than just a story; one small story has the power to become a window or doorway that elucidates bigger stories and truths. Each of the five chapters in this section focus on how specific stories about healing from personal, family and military conflicts provide poetic and sometimes profound insights into human endeavour in the face of suffering and pain. These endeavours inevitably have ripple effects, moving backwards and forwards from being deeply personal, to affecting and shaping relationships, to influencing social and political contexts. The section begins with stories of healing after war and political conflict, as I outline ongoing efforts in Southern Africa to facilitate personal and social healing by bringing contrasting and conflicting stories from the apartheid era into the same space. Welby Ings's story comes from the context of New Zealand-Aotearoa, where he and a cousin discovered that a relative, assumed killed on the battlefield in World War One, was actually confined to a psychiatric institution. His discovery of the truth led to an unfolding creative process that has challenged assumptions about military history, trauma, masculinities and social norms.

The following two chapters focus on narrative and the use of storied approaches in clinical contexts. Elizabeth Cummings gives an account from the Australian context of how including all of her children into her family's counselling process provided a depth of insight and a breadth of healing that neither she and her husband nor their clinicians could have imagined. The chapter goes on to describe how Cummings has written a book about children becoming agents and partners of healing in their families, which has in turn led to her being invited to share her work more broadly. Sarah Garvey and Rachel Chung use a personal story, of how deep suffering can desiccate personal narratives that provided a coherent sense of personhood self and space, to outline the possibilities of narrative medicine. This is an emerging field of work in which patient and clinician become co-authors and co-readers of a process of diagnosis and treatment.

Finally, Gavin Fairbairn explores the ways in which comic genres in British and American film and television can provide insight into the narrative processes at work in suicides and attempted suicides.

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The chapters in this section share the healing dimensions and possibilities when hidden stories are revealed; silent suffering is given voice; and disruptions of social and ideological interpellations of people's identities enable greater freedom and justice than has previously been possible.

CHAPTER 11

Stories from Different Sides: Reflections on Narrative-Based Dialogues in Addressing the Legacies of Apartheid Wars

Theresa Edlmann

Abstract

The apartheid era in South Africa was defined by various theatres of violence and conflict. The generation of young South Africans who lived through this time faced complex decisions about their level of involvement in this violence. These conflicts, and the choices they imposed, came to an end with the dawn of democracy in the early 1990s. However, socio-political dynamics; economic structures; family dynamics; and individuals' personal lives continue to be etched with the legacies of this violence, in both traumatic and resilient ways. This chapter will explore the narrative-based approach to dialogue and compassionate conversations between historical enemies initiated in 2012 by the *Legacies of apartheid wars* project at Rhodes University and partners. These dialogues have used multiple modes of story-telling and a range of narrative-based approaches with the intention of acting as a catalyst for deeper understanding of both self and other. They have been framed as an act of solidarity and validation; a means to build new possibilities for non-violent meaning-making. The work has, however, proven contested and contentious. This chapter will reflect on these approaches, as well as some of the challenges and learnings that have emerged.

Key Words

Legacies of apartheid wars – memory activism – trauma – narrative – memory and forgetting – thresholds of silence

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1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to engage in a process of reflection and critique of transitional justice; historical dialogue; memory; and trauma. My intention is to unpack the social and political implications of facilitating narrative-based processes about the relationships between the past and the present in a context of historical systems of violence and coercion.

South Africa's transition since the 1994 elections has been turbulent to say the least. The often-lauded *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC) was a landmark institution that developed an unprecedented model of public confession, using narrative-based approaches to build an archive of testimonies about historical events and abuses of human rights. Since then, a number of civil society initiatives have sought to continue and adapt this work.

A growing need in this field of endeavour has been for people who were caught up in the military and political violence of the apartheid era to engage with people who had historically been constructed as their enemies. I provide some context to this work by outlining two examples of the historical dialogue work currently under way in South Africa.

2 The *Legacies of Apartheid Wars* Project

The first example is the *Legacies of apartheid wars* (LAWS) project, which was established at Rhodes University in 2011 (Edlmann, 2015).

An issue which became a conceptual pivot around which the organisation's work operated was that making sense of any one aspect of the apartheid wars required making sense of the whole social and political context. Working with groups from one racial and ideological group was valuable up to a point; the stories being told about a particular military or political grouping from the apartheid era could only be fully understood when heard alongside stories of those who would in the past have been other, seen as enemies.

Activities undertaken by the LAWS Project included public dialogues; seminars; a conference in 2013; and the development of photographic and video works. Participants in these events included veterans of both statutory and non-statutory apartheid era military groupings from both South Africa and Namibia; members of apartheid era self-defence units in South Africa; family members of people who died during the apartheid era wars; academics; activists; and students.

3 Worcester Hope and Reconciliation Process

The *Worcester hope and reconciliation process* (WHRP) was initiated in 2009 in a small rural town near Cape Town (*Khulumani* support group, 2012). Worcester was the setting for intense levels of political violence and police repression during the 1970s and 1980s (Reynolds, 2014), as well as being the context in which a right-wing grouping exploded a bomb in a crowded supermarket on Christmas Eve in 1996. Four people were killed and 67 injured (*Khulumani* support group, 2012).

The WHRP has initiated a wide range of activities in partnership with *The Restitution Foundation* (n. d.), with the intention of being a community-led initiative aimed at addressing the needs for both healing of the psychosocial wounds of the past, as well as realising social and economic justice that is also a legacy of the past.

In 2013 three men from Worcester, who fought on different sides of the conflict, participated in a panel discussion at the *War resisters' international conference* held in Cape Town. The success of this panel and the profound effect it had on the men who took part prompted discussions about the possibilities of a broader process of sharing stories by ex-combatants and their family members from across political and ideological divides within the Worcester community. This process is under way.

4 Key Themes and Issues

4.1 *Working on Thresholds*

Processes that engage with the relationships between the past and the present work on a number of boundaries or thresholds. They are spaces of constant movement, complexity and ambiguity. Dynamics that are presented as binaries for the sake of discussion, reflection and learning are seldom discrete and oppositional to each other in their lived experience. A threshold is more like the edges of a folded piece of fabric: depending on the light, the ways the folds have arranged themselves and the perspective of the viewer or observer, there are any number of ways of understanding what people are dealing with.

The primary threshold on which historical memory and dialogue work rests is that of memory and forgetting. In an ostensibly a post-conflict context such as South Africa, the process of shifting silences and invoking the speaking of memories can take place prematurely. That may well have been the case for many people who testified at TRC hearings, for instance. The overwhelming,

ineffable nature of violence potentially strips a person of the language to name what happened and what the legacies of those violent events have been. This is especially so when the violence that person is dealing with is an expression of structural, ongoing and iterated layers of violence and potential trauma. In spite of the way the TRC tried to work on a case-by-case basis, there is seldom only one story to be told. Any account rests on the foundations of realms of silence about various factors, people, power dynamics and events that may never be spoken or acknowledged.

The pressure to describe events before a person or group are ready could actually prove to be counter-productive. Both the passage of time and the fact that people relate to the past differently as they get older seem to be important factors to consider.

In their book about post-war silences, Ben-Ze'ev, Ginio and Winter (2010) explore the ways speaking and silence, or memory and forgetting, are shaped by cultural codes that shift and change over time. When the time comes to disrupt silent spaces, it is possible for people to become memory agents in narrating their own experiences and influencing the memory fields (Lomsky-Feder, 2004; Lomsky-Feder, 2009) that have previously silenced and marginalised them in some way (Ben-Ze'Ev *et al.*, 2010, p.11).

In the case of South Africa, I would argue that the recent sense of urgency that people feel about dealing with the past has grown over time for a few reasons. The first is subjective and somewhat personal. People spend the later years of their lives reflecting on what they did in their youth and needing to make sense of their choices and life experiences. Many of the young people caught up in the violence of the 1970s and 1980s are now in their fifties, sixties and seventies; they are in a very different phase of life. The second is more contextual. There has been a recent escalation of public violence that leaves nobody in any doubt that apartheid has not been undone in South African society. The violence has manifested in physical, symbolic and discursive ways. Firstly, the majority of people who lived in a state of poverty and marginalisation under apartheid continue to find themselves in this predicament, having increasingly taken to the streets to protest about the government's lack of progress in providing basic services and realising fundamental human rights for citizens. Similarly, students whose parents do not earn enough to pay university fees took to the streets last year to protest at the news of a fee hike for 2016, demanding that tertiary education be free. At about the same time, a series of symbolic protests took place on campuses around the country during which statues and other representations of the past were destroyed or removed. This was seen as a symbolic way of dismantling the social, economic and political legacies of colonialism and apartheid (although apartheid was, to all intents

and purposes, a form of colonialism in itself). Finally, the discursive violence has taken the form of a number of public spats as white South Africans have insulted black South Africans in public spaces and on social media using crude, angry, racist and bigoted language. These outbursts have been challenged in a number of forums and in some cases have led to charges of public violence and hate speech. In return, there have been increasingly incendiary calls from a newly formed political party for the current government to be overthrown by force and for land stolen by "whites" during colonialism to be expropriated. Racialised discursive divides continue to shape the political and public spheres.

The complexities facing people who seek to be memory agents in this context are significant. The passage of time has led to an escalation of tensions in the public sphere, rather than the kind of easing that facilitates smooth transitions into memory work. Shifting thresholds of silence about the past require shifting thresholds of silence about the very uncomfortable present too. When the discursive *laagers* that shape how people narrate their experiences are still so polarised, the task of creating a safe enough space for stories to be told freely by people from all sides is a daunting one. And yet the risk would seem to be that, without such processes, the polarisation will only continue to become more extreme.

In the midst of these challenges, when is a facilitated intervention or dialogue process enabling? And when does it end up reinforcing memory fields and discursive laagers in ways that shut down and pre-empt the potential narrative shifts that a story-telling process is intended to enable?

There are a few more issues that need to be considered before addressing this question. One is the issue of how narrative-based approaches address the issue of trauma.

4.2 *Memory and Trauma*

One of the most challenging aspects of identifying and dealing with traumatic experiences is the "narrative wreckage" (Crossley, 2000, p. 56) that they give rise to. This refers to the way in which the previously coherent and often well-rehearsed stories of a person's life history, their identity and their place in the world up to that point are disrupted and fragmented. The result is that it is impossible to piece together a clear account of themselves, what happened during particular traumatic experiences, or what the effects and legacies of those traumas have been. The courage and psychological resources required to reconfigure coherent personal narratives in the face of emotional, mental and physical fragmentation are intense enough. They become even more so in a context and society that itself remains deeply fractured, and where violence, poverty and crime are relentless and ongoing realities.

The other dimension to trauma that is important to bear in mind, in a narrative-based approach to historical memory and dialogue work, is that time is not a linear phenomenon. The intensity of traumatic experiences potentially means that they remain ever in the present tense in people's minds; it is impossible to describe events as being in the past (Andrews, 2010, p. 155). For some, these memories remain locked in realms of the unsayable and the unsaid because the overwhelming power of the experience is undiminished, even with the passage of time.

And, in the midst of making sense of the personal dimensions of trauma, it is also important to bear in mind that the people engaging in historical memory and dialogue work come from families, communities and societies that are themselves traumatised. An individual narrative is based on both a personal set of stories and forms a map of the way in which a person's context has been shaped by, and shapes, where and how they live.

The facilitation of a process that is intended to promote release from painful, unspoken memories and the possibilities of new understandings cannot ignore the risks posed by trauma for people and for the process. In taking cognisance of these risks, historical memory and dialogue work also needs to have realistic understandings of what it intends to achieve.

4.3 *Do Narratives Actually Shift in Memory Work?*

The people, who participate in processes such as the dialogues and workshops that the LAWS Project and WHRP have facilitated, have committed to the possibility of a number of potential changes.

One would be the fact that people speak about and describe experiences and events for the first time. This is an inevitably intense and cathartic moment, one in which suppressed emotions are finally released. Once the story has been told for the first time, it becomes possible to tell it again. And again. And it will shift and evolve with each telling. However, the safety of the context within which this takes place will determine whether the person is left in such an emotionally raw state that they will suffer from a renewed sense of narrative wreckage and struggle to tell the story again, or whether the catharsis will have a quality of relief and future possibility.

Another dimension to the process is the experience of their story being witnessed, and being a witness to others' stories. In narrative therapeutic theory, part of the role of a witness is to sit outside of a story, being in solidarity with the speaker as an act of hope (Weingarten, 2000, p. 402). This dimension to an historical memory and dialogue process is poignant and meaningful both when people have shared similar experiences and when they have been in completely opposite and adversarial positions in the broader narrative of a

context. The experience of hearing and being heard changes a story from being an individual event to becoming something shared, collective and part of a bigger social process. I have witnessed on many occasions how this shift can bring a profound sense of relief and creative perspective for people.

However, ideally, there is a further dimension to an historical memory and dialogue process that takes the possible significance of the process even further. This is the realm of what I would call shifting from narrative reinforcement to narrative repair. Narrative reinforcement takes place when stories are told in such a way as to bolster historical constructs or discursive *laagers* (Edlmann, 2012). In the South African context, this may take the form of a white soldier who fought in the SADF insisting that he never oppressed black people or fought for apartheid, but was actually defending his country from the communist forces in the Cold War that were threatening the stability of Southern Africa. Narrative reinforcement could also take the form of a victim of political violence telling a story in such a way that they do not recognise their own potential agency in dealing with their pain and suffering. The story becomes a way of reinforcing certain discourses, demonstrating the ways in which trauma sometimes renders narratives of agency, resilience and post-traumatic growth unattainable.

Narrative repair becomes possible when an event or historical memory dialogue process leads to somebody recognising the place their story holds within the bigger picture of their context. So, for instance, for the victim of political violence, it could lead to a greater understanding of the moral dignity of their story, an affirmation of the stoicism of the silent coping strategies in the midst of ongoing marginalisation and suffering and a release of the sense of isolation that the silencing of trauma often causes. By contrast, the white soldier's story could shift from being based on justifying his actions and political ideologies in the past to recognising the extent to which propaganda from the apartheid government has shaped his identity and life narratives. Once this shift has taken place, the creative possibilities of new framings of the narratives of people's lives and relationships can unfold. This kind of process also has the potential to catalyse creative shifts and a growing voicing of hidden and "forgotten" dimensions to stories, which will in turn affect others who are witnesses to these shifts.

But, as with other dimensions to narrative-based dialogues, narrative shifts do not sit on binaried thresholds. In exploring the ways in which storytelling can bring about change, there is always the danger that the culture and power dynamics of a process end up creating a whole new set of discursive *laagers*. The racial and gender identities of the facilitators and organisers, as well as the methods they use, potentially polarise and trap a process in the realm of

identity politics, or create a safe and enabling culture and style of working, before the process has even begun. At other levels, the narratives of reconciliation, forgiveness and the "rainbow nation" that have shaped South African society potentially create the risk that people will feel implicitly coerced into using certain kinds of language and discourses. This inevitably strips a process of authenticity, and precipitates a complex kind of identity negotiation where what appear to be narratives of repair are more likely to be superficial narrative adjustments. This is not to say that recognising these dynamics within a process, naming them and inviting a level of transparent engagement with these potential narrative traps is not possible. If handled well, such an engagement with unpacking hidden narratives could lead to a dynamic, creative and remarkable process.

Finally, when authentic and sometimes difficult processes of narrative repair do take place, there is always the issue of what I would call narrative loss to be managed. This is the loss of an, often simplistic, notion of historical memory, based on discursive *laagers* and a stereotyped version of the enemy or historical "other". It is the process of shifting from the realms of nostalgia about the past into memory work in which the relationships between the past and the present become dynamic and reciprocal, constantly in shift and requiring ongoing narrative repair. Svetlana Boym poetically describes nostalgia about the past in the following way:

> Nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy. Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface.
>
> BOYM, 2001, p.xiv

This "home" that she describes can take various forms. But it is usually perceived to be necessary as a way of avoiding the painful complexities of the present. However difficult and violent the past might actually have been, the passage of time and the stresses of the present make the past seem somehow preferable and easier. It is the realm that is defended when people's stories of the past involve dimensions of narrative reinforcement. Any genuine process of narrative repair requires deconstructing those reinforcements, and letting go of the ossified dimensions of nostalgia that are woven into stories about

the past. This is painful; it requires losing something that has probably felt foundational and containing in a person's stories about difficult experiences of violence, change and possible trauma. It has possibly been the means by which people have shifted from narrative wreckage into at least some level of narrative coherence in accounting for the past. The amount of narrative, emotional and psychological work required for this process of narrative loss to take place is profound; as is the process of building new ways of framing life stories through narrative repair.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the LAWS Project and WHRP as two recent examples of historical memory and dialogue work in South Africa as a way of unpacking the narrative elements of this field of work. For this work to have abiding consequences, rigorous reflection and praxis is needed, that embraces rather than excludes the contestations and challenges of the present context.

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CHAPTER 12

Invisible Stories: Loss, Recovery and the Rhetoric of War

Welby Ings

Abstract

In New Zealand, men who returned shell shocked from the World Wars were framed in terms of failed masculinity (Showalter, 1987); maladjustment (Mosse, 1996); malingering (Clarke, 1991); and dereliction of duty and cowardice (Parsons, 2013). These were not the strong, heroic soldiers who sustained physical injuries in defence of a nation, but a difficult reminder of our human inability to cope. In 2015, I began making a film about my great uncle who had died a war hero. However, while researching the story I discovered something hidden. His family story was a lie. He was shot in the act of desertion. In our commemorative ceremonies and sanctioned histories of war, such men's stories normally do not appear. In researching the production design for the film about his death, I encountered two distinctive phenomena, absence and myth. There was an absence of records, an absence of photographs and an absence of lived experience. This chapter considers the nature of sanctioned absence in narratives of war. It then briefly discusses the challenges of such expurgation when designing the physical world of a film when issues of transgressive sexuality and defiance have been deliberately erased from both family and institutional records.

Key Words

Desertion – homosexuality – malingering – masculinity – sanctioned narratives – suicide – shell shock – short film – *Sparrow*

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FIGURE 12.1 A small winged boy, who is the story's protagonist, wanders the halls of an abandoned psychiatric hospital where his grandfather died in disgrace. The film *Sparrow* concerns his search for the truth behind a family myth of heroism and the impact the revelation of his grandfather's actions has on his condition as a bullied child. (The 90-second trailer and preliminary sketches used for the film can be accessed at http://sparrowfilm.nz/. In 2017, the film premiered in the 35th *Chicago Reeling International Film Festival*. It was then screened in the 27th *Atlanta Out on Film International Film Festival* and the 33rd *Berlin Interfilm International Short Film Festival*)

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1 A Box of Letters

My cousin told me about a small box of ephemera. He found it one evening when he was searching surreptitiously through the drawers in his father's workshop. Normally, the small shed was strictly out of bounds but he had broken in seeking a bike pump and, in his search, he discovered a modest cache of letters. They tore his family history open at the seams.

In the 1970s, my cousin's father insisted that they march annually in the memorial *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps* (*ANZAC*) parades that marked the remembrance of the nation's fallen soldiers. He explained to his boy that their grandfather had died a hero in the deserts of Egypt, having been shot while saving the lives of his compatriots. Although my cousin and his father were the only non-servicemen marching, the community's respect for fallen soldiers accommodated the gesture of familial pride.

But my uncle was marching for a lie. In the small pile of letters that he found in the box, my cousin uncovered a very sad story. His grandfather had not been killed in a heroic gesture of military sacrifice. He had died alone in the small back room of a psychiatric hospital, less than two hours from where they lived. When he returned to New Zealand at the end of the war, he was diagnosed

with shell shock. His letters traced 20 years of explanation and pleading with his son to come and visit him. The majority of them had never been opened.

The story that unfolded in these letters is heart breaking and it was the reason that I decided to tell the story of what happened through film. The more I read them, the more I came to understand that this man and his family were casualties of war. Not of the battle field, but of the pernicious nature of sanctified storytelling.

You see, my great uncle was shot in an act of desertion. Because of the incompetence of his commanding officer, he saw the man he loved torn apart with bullets. In grief and rage, he ripped off his uniform and carried his mate's body out into the enemy fire.

He was shot,
Naked,
In the back,
By his commanding officer.

Although my great uncle was brought back to New Zealand alive, he instantly became invisible. Like other men from the First and Second World Wars who epitomised the embarrassment of desertion, suicide or shell shock, he did not appear in the sanctioned newsreels of heroic stories that flowed into the nation's picture theatres. His experiences did not feature in the newspapers of the period or in the books that documented and disseminated the sanctioned stories of war. His sexuality was erased. His protest was erased - and so was his story. Out of fear of public censure, even in his family, he became invisible, replaced with a bearable tale of heroic martyrdom.

The only photograph taken of him in uniform was enlarged and placed on the wall above the fireplace.

He became a myth.

2 The Crisis of Masculinity

So why do such things happen? The question of story erasure is complex and it may be examined from a number of perspectives. However, in this instance, I would like to consider, through the lens of compromised masculinity, why this story was covered up.

My great uncle was a homosexual deserter who attempted a form of suicide. Although he was apparently highly respected by the men in his fighting

force, he represented a counter identity to the sanctioned story of wartime masculinity.

Both Peter Stearns and Joe Dubbert suggest that between the two World Wars there had been a "crisis of masculinity" (Stearns, 1979, p. 209). Mark Grandstaff (2004) argues that the Great Depression replaced the existing Victorian standards that had emphasised masculine values of character, duty and hierarchy. The severity of the economic crisis resulted in many men finding themselves unemployed, humiliated and vulnerable. As a consequence, he suggests, modern virtues of manhood, including personality; malleability; youth; and sexuality, superseded what had existed. Tom Pendergast (1997) argues that these qualities surfaced in men "who had been blocked from success or who looked upon success, but not on one who had succeeded". As a consequence, existing notions of the male, as a self-made master of his fate and a rugged self-adjusting individual, had begun to disintegrate (Pendergast, 1997, 2000).

However, individuality and malleability were not qualities that would serve the needs of militarising nations in the Second World War. Both Grandstaff (2004) and Leff (1991) note that notions of masculinity were suddenly changed in the early 1930s to emphasise "ultimate sacrifice" and ideals of a self-proving male who flawlessly demonstrated the characteristics of patriotism, loyalty and manly courage.

In the early 1940s, this new rhetoric of masculinity permeated literature, film, advertising and political speech making (Grandstaff, 2004). Indicative of the latter, was the oratory of Jonathan Daniels (1941), the personal assistant to Franklin Roosevelt, who argued that the newly realised World War Two soldier would enable his nation to become "magnificently male again" (Polenberg, 1968, p. 3). Daniels believed that only trial by combat could produce this new form of masculinity. He said:

> The 20s [are] gone with self-indulgence. The 30s have disappeared with self-pity. The 40s are here in which the Americans stand on a continent as men—men again fig*hting in the crudest man terms.*
>
> DANIELS, 1941, reprinted in Polenberg, 1968, p. 3

Although this example is American, Daniel's "crude masculine" engagement constituted a framework for Second World War masculinity that presented New Zealand men with a new identity predicated on the values of courage, determination, toughness and self-sacrifice (Mosse, 1996, p. 109). These qualities, it was understood, would be tested and judged by the individual's contribution to a higher, more noble cause (Doty, 1993, pp. 147–148; Roper, 1994, p. 112). In this instance, war.

Inside this new masculinisation came another shift. Although, in the late nineteenth century, bachelor heroes like Cecil Rhodes epitomised the robust homosocial adventurer, soldiers were now expected to function as responsible, breadwinning fathers and husbands (Francis, 2002, p. 644). In so doing, they were required "to reconcile their yearning for the male bonding and adventure of military service, with the appeal of marriage and fatherhood" (Burns, 2012, p. 56).

Of course, this emphasis on heteronormative masculinity was nothing new. David Boxwell had described the First World War as having a "dominant, militarist, and heterosexist culture that forbade any open display of male-male erotic desire" (Boxwell, 2002, p. 3). However, recent historians, like Chris Brickell, have highlighted a greater diversity of attitudes towards homoeroticism among New Zealand soldiers in World War Two. While masculine ideals emphasised sacrifice and loyalty, Brickell (2008) claims that within this, men did find intimate relationships possible, providing they remained platonic or were kept discreet.

This said, officially, the heterosexual, masculine ideal remained policed (Mason, 2016). Male bonding that crossed the line between comradeship and physical love was censured and its stories silenced. Homosexuality was still officially illegal and associated with the decay of masculinity.[1]

3 Shell Shock, Suicide and Desertion

Notions of masculinised heroism, endurance and noble sacrifice still govern the dominant rhetoric of war and they are used to construct a distinct metanarrative that continues to exclude or marginalise experiences that do not contribute to its "truth"[2] Because of this, soldiers' stories of dissent or transgression are often rendered invisible. The agent employed in this process is silence. This may be illustrated by three statistically documented but under discussed phenomena of the two World Wars; shell shock, suicide and desertion (Wilson

1 A distinctive example of this anxiety may be found in official and media rhetoric surrounding female impersonators in New Zealand's soldier concert parties of the period. Burns (2012) notes that much attention was paid to emphasising the married status of these men and Vaughan (1995) notes that the party's official line was that the female impersonators were "virtually press-ganged into the unit and female roles" (p. 8) and that they were undertaking an unpleasant task purely out of necessity.

2 The fatal injury burden from World War One for New Zealand was high (16,703 deaths), easily exceeding the country's 11,625 deaths from all causes in World War Two.

FIGURE 12.2 Gordon shot in the act of desertion. Prepared to commit suicide in protest at the war, he carries the body of his dead lover out into the enemy gunfire.

et al., 2013). All three, arguably, could be ascribed to the story of my great uncle and I allude to all three in the film *Sparrow* (2016, see Figure 12.2).

My uncle did not die as a result of being shot. He was sent home with a condition known variously as combat stress reaction or shell shock. Like a significant number of men at the end of the First and Second World Wars, he returned to a country where the code of heroism embraced physical injury but had significant difficulty accommodating the effects of psychological damage.[3]

A number of historians argue that the New Zealand army; government; medical profession; and civilian population failed to understand the nature and extent of psychological suffering among these returned soldiers and, in general, veterans encountered a relatively unsympathetic reception (Parsons, 2013; Clark, 1991; Boston, 1993). Boyack and Tolerton (1990) suggest that both medical and repatriation officials tended to view men who broke under the pressures of war, as malingerers. To others, the inability to cope with the rigours of battle also suggested a lack of masculine fortitude (Showalter, 1987; Phillips, 2007; Bourke, 2000). Repatriation officials were often unwilling to recognise the legitimacy of these men's claims for war pensions and free specialist medical treatment (Boston, 1993; Parson, 2013). This reluctance had historical origins. In the First World War, the New Zealand army, in an effort to stem what it saw as a troubling burgeoning of shell-shock cases, sought to contain the problem by removing the diagnosis. In 1917, it instructed medical officers to label suspected sufferers "Not yet diagnosed (NYD): Shell shock" (Carbery,

■ Reference Parson (2013) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

3 As early as December 1914, 7–10 per cent of all British officers and 3–4 per cent of all other ranks were suffering from mental breakdowns. By late 1916, shell-shock cases constituted 40 per cent of all British casualties from heavy firing zones (Stone, 1985).

1924). By the middle of the year, recognising the increasing use of the words "shell shock" among the soldiers, it forbade the term's employment by front line medical officers. Possible sufferers were now labelled "Not yet diagnosed: Non-efficient" (NYDN) (Carbery, 1924). Thus, in two simple steps, on official records shell shock disappeared. Men who lost the ability to reason, sleep, walk or talk were relegated to a state of diagnostic *persona non grata*. They and their condition became officially invisible.

To a certain extent, the issue of invisibility also permeated cases of desertion and suicide. While military documents record five official executions resulting from 28 New Zealand men being sentenced to death for desertion between 28 July, 1914 and 11 November, 1918, there are very few accounts of these men's stories.[4] In general, if records are available today, they are cursory and devoid of human detail. The same may be said for information relating to the four official suicides.

Indeed, when researching the visual world of the film *Sparrow* (2016), the country's archives and museums offered little beyond names and dates.[5] There were few stories, no photographs and minimal details of those whose lives had ended in a state of psychological exhaustion. The stories of their deaths did not fit into the sanctioned metanarrative. They were simply recorded briefly and then filed away.

The silencing of stories of desertion in World War Two may be most graphically illustrated by the little-known mass desertion in 1943 of more than 500 soldiers from the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force. These men had been brought home on leave but refused the order to return to the front. Although they were charged and found guilty of desertion (a charge that was later quashed), the incident was scrupulously hidden from the public and knowledge about it only surfaced through disconnected personal accounts and hearsay (New Zealand history: *Nga korero a ipurangi o Aotearoa*, 2012).

In New Zealand today, grand narratives of heroic sacrifice in the two World Wars continue to hold primacy in the nation's identity. But there are no

4 See, Table 1, Causes of death among NZEF personnel during the First World War (both Northern and Southern Hemispheres 1914–1918) (Wilson, *et al.*, p. 15). These soldiers were posthumously pardoned in 2000 through the *Pardon for soldiers of the Great War Act*. An exception is the case of 28-year-old Private Frank Hughes, the first New Zealand soldier to be executed on 25 August, 1916. Last accessed 31 July 2018, http://www.nzhistory. net.nz/page/first-new-zealand-soldier-executed.

5 General and individual records covering deserters in World War Two can be located in the files of the National Service Department (Special Tribunal and Appeal Board records) and the Labour Department District Offices (Conscientious Objector files), although access restrictions to this information apply.

memorials to the men who committed suicide in the dugouts of Egypt. There is also little remembered about desertion and shell shock. The stories of men who returned from the front lines psychologically damaged still lie quietly within the families who had to cope with shame and fallout.

In researching the film *Sparrow* (2016), I talked with a wide range of individuals, but most were not prepared to have their stories recorded. They shared what had happened quietly with me over a cup of tea in modest kitchens. They recognised the story in *Sparrow* (2016) through equivalence; the little-discussed relationship between their grandfather and his cobber,[6] the violent fallout of damaged men who were expected to be quietly subsumed into under-equipped families, the alcoholism and secreted stories of suicide. These are the tales of broken men that their children and grandchildren, 70 years later, were still too ashamed to uncover. Such stories are important because they constitute counter narratives and arguably reveal for us a greater and more human condition of war.

4 Implications and Address

In making the film *Sparrow* (2016), I therefore faced a problem. I had the story of my great uncle and his grandson who went to search the corridors of the abandoned psychiatric hospital where he had been interned. But, there were no details of his world. When I tried to find original footage of the symptoms of shell shock in New Zealand, there were no visual records.[7] When I searched the nation's archives for photographs of these men and the wards they occupied, I could only find pictures of physically injured veterans who occupied the front wards of the hospitals.[8] While countless official newsreels showed physically injured soldiers disembarking from homecoming ships and recovering in new pastoral landscapes, the veterans with psychological injuries were not there.

6 A New Zealand and Australian slang word used between men to describe one's close male companion.

7 The only source material that I could locate as a reference for actors in the film came from the Royal London Hospital Archives and from footage compiled by *British Pathé* film archivists and released to *MailOnline* in November 2012. Some of this data was included in the documentary *Shell shock 1914–18* (2013).

8 Repatriated shell-shock sufferers from World War One were sent to the civilian asylum at Seacliff or to the Wolfe Home at Auckland Mental Hospital. Later, Karitane (in Dunedin), Queen Mary Hospital at Hamner Springs, and King George V Hospital at Rotorua operated as internment centres. However, in general, treatment was ineffective. In 1938, Anderson Carbery undertook a review and found 91 per cent of patients at Queen Mary Hospital and other neurological departments showed either no improvement or increased disability (Clarke, 1991, pp. 150–151).

Because I was dealing with so much lost information, I decided to approach the film as a form of enigma. The war story plays out alongside the simple narrative of a boy's search for the truth behind his grandfather's death, but what he finds is inexplicable.

Visually, war is treated like a lost photograph (see Figure 12.3). The world is desaturated yet retains subtle elements of colour. The lens through which we watch the story unfold is dirty and damaged. Within the motion of the film, time moves in irregular ways.

The world of the abandoned psychiatric hospital also references this sense of loss. The inexplicable residues of shell shock that the boy encounters (see Figures 12.4 and 12.5) are seen through subtle filters that allude to damage and neglect. The vestiges of forgotten lives refer directly to symptoms of shell shock, including the loss of an ability to speak, the loss of body control and the thousand-yard stare.[9]

5 In Concluding

In a way, *Sparrow* (2016) is a film of lost stories. Although, currently, much of the Western world is occupied with commemorations of the Great War, such a film poses a counterpoint to the corpus of sanctioned narratives that have

FIGURE 12.3 In the film, the boy tells us two versions of his grandfather's backstory. The first is the heroic myth created by his father and the second reveals the true events. Both versions integrate historical archive footage and are proportioned so that they reference dimensions of documentary material of the period. However, at the point that the grandfather deserts the army, the footage expands into the cinematic dimensions of the boy's contemporary world and the story concurrently extends its colour range.

9 This symptom, found among victims of shell shock, is a form of dissociation from trauma.

FIGURE 12.4 The thousand-yard stare. In the film, the veteran is unaware of any presence in his room and a balloon is absently released and dissolves inexplicably as it rises upwards.

FIGURE 12.5 The loss of speech. For this sequence, I designed translucent, damaged filters that extended the idea of the worn tape pasted over the veteran's mouth. The tape references the hysterical loss of speech that was a common symptom of shell-shock casualties (Reid, 2014).

been generated to reinforce ideals of national loyalty, masculinity, bravery and sacrifice.

I would suggest that oppositional stories like *Sparrow* (2016) are important because they enable us to consider, know and understand a greater breadth of the human condition (see, Figure 12.6).

Connelly and Clandinin tell us that humans "are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (1990, p. 2). Given that all stories are political, and so is the context in which they operate, when we create narratives that deal with what has been hidden, we must sometimes negotiate a difficult line between protecting the vulnerable and ensuring that what they

FIGURE 12.6 The boy searches for his Grandfather's room. This sequence was designed as a subtle metaphor for the process of discovering what has been hidden. We do not view him in the normal manner of documentary cinema. We watch from a state of seclusion, perched somewhere awkwardly in the rafters of a building. Here, a world has been opened after many years of secrecy and we are uncertain how to engage with it.

know is not lost. To do this in *Sparrow* (2016) I have woven together two stories, a young boy's and his grandfather's. They inhabit an enigmatic, visually lyrical world that is connected by a small bird that has been a friend to both characters. The bird is fictional. It is a metaphor for what is constrained and eventually set free. In the story, beauty, brutality, truth and a small fiction play out as a narrative poem about what has been hidden and what can never be fully recovered.

The loss that permeates the film is a consequence. It is the cost of hidden stories and the reason why writers and filmmakers must sometimes reach beyond the desire to entertain and endeavour to exhume what it means to be a human being.

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CHAPTER 13

The Place of Story and Storytelling in Clinical Contexts

Elizabeth Mary Cummings

Abstract

In the area of mental health there is little literature geared towards informing the young directly about illnesses and situations that impact their family lives. Storytelling is a powerful means, not only of sharing but also of empowering and enabling the reader or listener, to understand the storyteller's world from a different viewpoint. Storytelling can help to engage young people in discussions about difficult topics such as eating disorders; depression; cancer; and death. By examining the world from a child's perspective, adults working with and caring for children going through traumatic experiences may gains important insights into the context that the child is living within and thus work on developing effective strategies to best support the child, helping them to develop the resilience needed to cope in their daily lives.

Key Words

Stories – healing – family – mental health – trauma – clinical practice – cultural development – childhood trauma – children – mental health

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1 The Profile of Mental Health Today

Mental health is a commonly used term in a wide range of contexts. From classrooms to staffrooms, from playing fields to the office water-fountains, from newsreels to blockbuster movies, the many sides of mental health dominate discussion. Stories of people's personal journeys or traumas and recounts of how various groups within communities face their challenges are beginning to be openly discussed, including in social media.

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The question as to why we are hearing more about this topic may have something to do with increased understanding of certain areas of mental health. But then again, it may also have something to do with needing an explanation for facets of our lives that remain an area of challenge. It also reflects a growing acceptance in the public domain of the realness of mental health and its ramifications. There are increasing levels of comprehension about how the hidden nature of mental illnesses is no less painful than those physical infirmities that can be more visible. Whatever the reason for this shift, one thing is for sure, the augmented tolerance for discussing this previously hidden subject matter comes hand-in-hand with the very human desire to share and communicate.

This being the case, it is therefore peculiar to think that until recently there has been little literature geared towards sharing information about mental health issues with the young. By young, I refer to those children who are still in their primary years of education or who are yet to go to school. Over the last decade there has been a steady increase in children's books dealing with matters like depression, divorce, anxiety and bereavement. However, there is still some way to go; topics such as eating disorders and transgender issues are yet to be represented adequately on bookshop shelves.

2 Mental Health Issues in My Own Family

The story of how I became involved in writing books for healing started several years ago when my elder daughter developed anorexia nervosa. At the time, while not only worried about our daughter's health and how to help her, my husband and I were also at a loss as to how to handle this matter with our other daughter who was a young child at the time. There did not appear to be much information available to share with her at an age-appropriate level. So, we did what we thought best at the time and tried to hide it from her.

Looking back on this time it is clear how ridiculous the charade of keeping up a normal life for our younger child was. At the time we did not know any better and were terrified that one sister's condition might impact the other's health and wellbeing. We wanted to prevent that at all costs. But did one sibling's experiences impact the other's? Of course, they did, but not as we imagined. It was not until we were referred to a paediatric expert in the field of eating disorders that we began to gain some insight into what we as a family were dealing with.

Our clinician asked us to bring the whole family into the initial appointment. We aired our scepticism about this. Despite our protestations that there

was no need to involve our younger child, the specialist continued to insist that we bring both our daughters to the meeting. At the appointment, as well as talking to us at length and completing a thorough medical review of our ill child, the consultant talked to our younger daughter directly and explained in very clear, matter-of-fact terms what was going on in the family.

3 Surprising Consequences

What happened next was truly incredible. In the course of this meeting, our younger daughter verbalised all the aspects of her sister's eating disorder she had witnessed – even without understanding what it meant from a clinical perspective. What is more, from the discussion, she was able to make sense of what was going on in her world.

The specialist advised us to talk to the school and to her class teacher. This we did and when we explained what was going on at home the teacher said, "I'm so glad that you have told me, the other teachers and I simply couldn't work out what was wrong with her, she hasn't been herself". (Parent teacher interview with class teacher of author's daughter, September 2010).

Our eyes were suddenly opened. This illness was not only making our daughter ill but was impacting on the whole family. The whole family needed to heal. To be able to do that, we all had to be involved and we all had to understand what was going on for each person to be able to help support each other. This was a turning point. From then on, we made sure we talked about what was going on with family, with friends, with our daughters' teachers and with those who were involved in our lives, the soccer coaches, the girl-guide leaders and our neighbours.

We had learnt the power of sharing our story and how it really could make a difference. This was manifest not only by way of those around us understanding and thus being able to support us as caregivers, but also in how our younger daughter was now informed and thus empowered to be part of the support team and see her role in helping her sister recover.

I cannot thank that specialist enough for this, for raising our awareness and making that call to action to share the story to heal. The road was incredibly long and progress often slow and stilted but we were all in this situation together and through this were made strong enough to keep going.

A couple of years later, when my daughter was well on the road to recovery, as we came out of a routine visit with our specialist, I had this sudden thought about how I was finding my daughter again. The idea grew into a larger realisation that she had somehow been lost, that my daughter as I knew her had disappeared during this time of her illness. This thought stuck fast. To my idea

clung the knowledge that it was more than that, for during her illness her heart had begun to waste; we had been told it was disappearing due to lack of nutrition. I reflected that during her illness, her food had often also disappeared: into the bin, on the floor, into the bottom of the school bag. I further realised that her usual happy demeanour had disappeared, as had her connections with friends and family. To all intents and purposes, she had been in the process of disappearing from our lives. It was then that the concept of what became a book manuscript entitled *The disappearing sister* (Cummings, 2015) was born.

4 The Beginning of a New Project

This new idea flourished and grew into a project. The words came rushing out as I wrote and there it was: A simple story of *anorexia nervosa*. It may well have rested as a personal note or diary entry or perhaps even a home-crafted book. Somehow it did not, and it was indeed published.

It is now being used by clinicians in Australia and shared with families as far afield as Canada and UK as a tool to support and comfort families going through the trauma of caring for a loved one with an eating disorder.

The development of this story into a finished book form had originally stemmed from a raw urge to share and make sense of my daughter's illness. Over time, the rationale for sharing this story expanded as my husband and I were often approached to speak to friends, friends of friends, acquaintance of friends and even customers and clients of friends. Each request came down to the same thing: a request to talk to a parent whose child was suffering from an eating disorder. We were asked to share our story with people who needed to talk to others who understood their grief and their situation.

We were quite amazed that we were now seen as some form of experts in this whole area; an area we had entered into blindly and unwillingly. Our overriding need was to share our story to help demystify the illness and to remove the stigma around the eating disorder that had gripped our family for years. We saw that if we could help just one family, one person in a small way, to give hope; to validate; to show solidarity; or to educate, this journey would not be a futile one.

5 Taking on New Challenges

I could never have anticipated where this storytelling would take me. Writing our story had enabled us to connect with and support other families. Through talking to them, we also identified exactly how far we ourselves had come from

those desperate dark days of anorexia nervosa-dominated lives. Documenting our story also brought other requests for more writing. Since the book's publication, I have been approached by people for stories about autism, for eating disorders stories told from the perspective of different family members and for other stories of healing.

When I am called upon to listen to others' recounts of their personal tragedy, their stories of trauma, loss or injustice my heart cries out, "Is there healing? Can there be hope? Where is the solace?" For those who are long-term caregivers, who have witnessed the suffering of loved ones or suffered great injustices themselves life can be a terrible place of despair and hopelessness. Yet there is also hope, there is a purpose, a reason to live on through these tragedies. And this new area of work has helped me to see this in real and inspiring ways.

The power of stories goes beyond their personal impact, though. Charitable foundations are often born out of the founder having directly experienced some event that highlighted the need for intervention. Hospitals use personal stories when requesting donations. Mental health organisations do so too, helping to inform and raise awareness about a particular illness. As a result, the stigma and shame long associated with such conditions can be reduced.

6 Storytellers and Story-listeners

Personal stories can help; can work towards healing, educating and building new connections. From the moment we open ourselves to such stories we are there as listeners to listen respectfully, actively openly. The storyteller is giving the listener their trust and this is a way for them both to reach new meaning and gain new strength by sharing.

This concept of the importance of the listener, one who listens openly, actively and respectfully, is explained by Abood (2012). Abood is a community cultural development (CCD) worker, in Australia, a *sheWriter* and an educator. Working with culturally diverse communities for more than twenty-five years the publications she has produced have helped to build platforms for discussion using storytelling in diverse settings. She has written for performance, radio and film. In Abood's (2012) TEDx talk, she explains that the role of listeners is imperative for storytelling to have the meaning and value that the storyteller intends. She talks about how the displaced survivors with whom she has worked have stressed that they "don't want counsellors or clinical psychologists. We don't want to start from the beginning we just want to tell our story". In this sense the sharing of personal narrative ceases to be merely a clinical or counselling process. It transcends the boundaries of traditional psychological

approaches to become a process of unifying people despite their different lived experiences. This has the effect of binding humanity and developing a sense of community focused on acknowledgement and acceptance of individual encounters; thus, the sharing brings people closer. Abood goes on to reference community development expert Margaret Ledwith:

> Silenced or heard with respect (storytelling is) an act of personal empowerment and telling one's story is about speaking up; speaking up, speaking out and speaking back, speaking… story has the capacity to take us beyond the boundaries of our own bodies into the external sharable world
>
> LEDWITH, 2011, cited in Abood, 2016.

What would happen if people refused to be quiet, to bury their experiences and their stories. What then? Like the people that Abood has worked with, I can vouch for the fact that the expressing of oneself through stories breaks silences and taboos, and takes one in directions that could not have been foreseen. The consequence of sharing is far-reaching and at times surprising, for both the storyteller and those reading or listening to the story.

One of the biggest surprises in my whole experience of storytelling was the letter I received from my daughter's GP, to whom I had given a copy of my book *The disappearing sister*. Epitomising the active and reflective listening described by Abood, this letter blew me away in its frank and emotional response to my simple little book. My doctor wrote:

> Elizabeth it is with deep respect and humility that I received *The disappearing sister*. Reading it brought me a whole range of emotions – sadness, compassion, and perhaps a deeper understanding of you and your family and what all of you went through during your daughter's illness.
>
> Letter from author's doctor to author. April 2015

The practitioner went on to comment upon what the impact of the book was in terms of its focus on the siblings of a sufferer: "How wonderful to focus on the sibling who gets lost in the turmoil and yet is such an important part of the healing process". (*ibid.*)

Furthermore, she reflected upon how the storytelling had caused her to re-examine her own understanding and consequentially her own practice: "I believe this book will help make me a better doctor and respond to the whole family in a better way with any disease process, particularly in mental health". (*ibid.*)

These comments came from a professional whose time and attention I had come to rely on over years of therapy and consultation. These were the words of someone whom I had viewed as a guru, an expert and a pillar on which to lean. What I had suspected to be the case, but had not been sure about, was that there is a journey of discovery and understanding that the practitioner travels with their patient. How marvellous that one so informed can take it upon themselves to be open to further learning and understanding. How this doctor might apply her new insights in the future is something to which I will probably never be privy to, but I am grateful that my storytelling opened her up to new possibilities. If this has been the case in our particular journey with mental health, then there are myriad possibilities for storytellers and storytelling to heal, enlighten and support those who work with families in the health and the community sector.

7 Storytelling as a Healing Tool

Senelick (2012) is a case in point. Over his forty years in the health sector he has sought to raise awareness about the need to educate and support disabled people and their families. His aim is to advocate for respect and resource provision for this sector of society.

Senelick outlines his theories on the healing power of stories by citing the renowned series *Chicken soup for the soul* (Canfield & Hansen, 1993) as an example of how real stories about real people can help others to cope with stress and trauma in their lives. He cites Stewart Gandolf's work in outlining why storytelling is an effective healing tool:

> Stories are mentally richer than simple instructions,
> Engage and involve the patient,
> Trigger empathy,
> Are more likely to be remembered and retold,
> Promote a two-way conversation,
> Transfer knowledge.
>
> GANDOLF, 2011

Engaging the listener in new ways of thinking can help to take away the stigma, the fear and the ignorance that block pathways to healing. Not only does this approach help with the treatment of the individual but it also helps those who are supporting loved ones to process what they are dealing with so that they can cope and work through their feelings.

Whilst I never intended to write *The Disappearing Sister* to heal myself, yet I admit it was a cathartic experience. It has given me a deeper understanding and a way of reflecting on what has happened within my family and to my daughters. For this I am grateful. As I retell my story I gain a deeper understanding and acceptance of what has happened to our family. As I listen to the stories of others I not only act as a support agent for them but also revisit my own experience and how far we have come in our journey to recovery. The writing and publishing of *The disappearing sister* took what was a personal narrative into new directions of empowerment and action, to a place of healing and to a place of giving. I have realised that, by entrusting their story to others, the storyteller gains new perspectives while also enlightening the understanding of the listeners. In the case of *The disappearing sister* this meant giving new points of reference for our doctor. For families dealing with mental health, issues storytelling can be a powerful call to action for clinicians.

8 Where to Now?

Series like *Chicken soup for the soul* (Canfield and Hanson, 1993) have grown into new literary and healing structures, successfully combining the latest medical advice with real stories about people's lives. It is inspiring to read in Senelick's (2012) article that the *Chicken soup* team, "recognised the power of narrative in health" and has formed a partnership with Harvard Health Publications to produce a new series to help improve readers' health.

I too intend to develop further stories beyond my first work, *The disappearing sister*, by focusing on the field of storytelling, health and the young. The title of the series is called *The elephant in the room.* This body of work will consider such topics as illness, abuse, autism and death. My intention is to provide means by which conversations can be started. Processes of healing and understanding can be embarked upon to enable a short road to recovery, and empowerment for all family members by identifying and taking up their role for the support of their loved one.

Key partners in this work will be those who have gone through their own experiences of loss or trauma. Through working with them, I aim to develop a storytelling series that empowers and helps people heal by focusing on the perspective of the very young.

By examining the world from a child's perspective, adults working with and caring for children going through traumatic experiences may learn about the emotional and physical context from within which the child is living. They can thus work on developing effective strategies to best support the child

and help them to enhance and develop the resilience needed to cope in their daily lives.

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CHAPTER 14

Singing the World: Narrative Medicine and Storied Existence

Sarah Garvey and Rachel Chung

Abstract

It often seems that personal narratives are at odds with medical care. As doctors, we have limited time with our patients. As patients, we often struggle to feel heard by our physicians. Our stories, how we grew up; what worries us; and what we had for breakfast, seem erased as we struggle against illnesses that defy language. Works from a variety of disciplines, literary; philosophical; and creative, contribute to an intersubjective view of illness and healing. Rachel's personal testimony introduces the chapter, as she reflects on memories of her experience as a patient, in the light of her more recent experiences as a doctor. Sarah then joins the conversation, along with the voices of published authors and together we explore some of the literary and philosophical roots of narrative medicine. Practitioners of narrative medicine seek to re-join story and diagnosis; personhood and treatment, a way of acknowledging that a medical history is not just a record of illness, it is a personal narrative. The chapter closes with Rachel's reflection on her own illness narrative, showing that narrative medicine is more than the practice of recording, it gives new language to illness and suffering.

Key Words

Personal narratives – patients – physicians – medicine – memories – healing

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1 Rachel Chung: Personal Testimony

Like most people, I understand the events of my life through narrative. I remember my childhood as if it were a documentary. I dream through camera angles and think in the space between poetry and prose. I narrate the daily

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events of my life so that I can access them later, and, by default, it follows that every memory I have is merely an interpretation of a lost moment in time.

How, then, can I remember being involuntarily admitted to the psychiatric ward at St. Roosevelt's Hospital in New York City? My memories are jumbled, lacking narrative, continuity and sense. Images of the emergency room; the ambulance; the blanketless bed; and curtainless window flash across my mind's eye. This is the shrapnel of the day I lost my mind. No words exist in my memory to colour the sensation of this experience. Over a year later, I have put my own language to it many times over. The memory has become a story; a poem; a play; and a sketch. It has evolved into a living narrative, an animal that grows and changes and takes on its own power and agency the longer I have it.

I don't actually remember what the window looked like, but I remember looking out of it, waiting for the sun to rise and warm up the linoleum floor. I don't remember what the food tasted like, but I remember eating alone on the first day and wondering what I could possibly do to pass the time ahead of me. I don't remember what was said to me by the psychiatrist, but I remember his glasses, his white hair, all the papers he asked me to sign.

To remember is to interpret; to narrate is to portray. The truth of my experience is irrelevant to my process of telling this story, rather, the memory lies in what is evoked in me when I am reminded of those few days and the months that led up to them. The event itself occurs only once, but the memory of it will continue in my mind many times over, different every time, influenced by the skills and experience I have gained since. In my study of narrative medicine, I have told this story over and over, relived it, lived in it and processed it. Every time I tell it, it is different. And with each telling I get closer to making my own peace with it. The study of narrative medicine has not only informed the way I process my own illness, but the way I relate to others and their stories. If you asked the psychiatrist who treated me in the hospital what the story of that weekend was for me, he would likely give you a shorter and very different answer. In short, his history of me would be incomplete.

The difficulty in crossing narrative with medicine is that memory is by nature subjective. It is the duty of the physician to distil an entire lifetime into a medical history, transforming the pieces of story given by the patient into a treatable diagnosis, a single fact corresponding to an index in a chart. However, the physicians I remember most fondly have gone far beyond this simple task. They have put my story at the forefront of my treatment, allowing my own narrative agency to guide their decisions about my life. I can understand my illness only through my narrative experience of it; stripping the narrative from my diagnosis strips me of my ownership of it. The challenge, then, is to treat the patient effectively without erasing the connection to history and body.

2 Narrative Medicine: Restructuring the Clinical Encounter

The goal of narrative medicine is to understand how storytelling can improve communication between doctor and patient, patient and patient, doctor and doctor. A broader understanding of narrative and its relationship to ourselves and others can lead to a more empathic method of treatment and a deeper understanding of suffering. Narrative medicine draws on healthcare, philosophy, ethics, and many other fields (Charon, 2017, p. 1). Rita Charon writes:

■ Reference Charon (2017) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

> From these sources come our commitments to relationships in patient-centered care and our conviction that narrative competence can widen the clinical gaze to include personal and social elements of patients' lives vital to the tasks of healing.
>
> CHARON, 2017, p. 1

In this section, we will introduce the key tenets of narrative medicine and briefly explore the philosophies behind them. Narrative competency, or cultural humility, as defined by Sayantani Dasgupta (2017) in *The principles and practice of narrative medicine*, encourages healthcare providers to "acknowledge how their own backgrounds affect the ways in which they interpret the views and values of others" (p. 148). The qualitative fields of the humanities supplement the science of medical care to improve the lives of both patients and providers (Marcus, 2017, p. 275). Narrative medicine recognises the value of storytelling and patient narrative in clinical practice, education, research and patient-care. Dr. Rita Charon, Professor of Medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, as well as Founder and Executive Director of the programme in narrative medicine at Columbia University, describes the narrative nature of a meeting of two people. In *Narrative medicine: Honoring the stories of illness,* she quotes scholar Barbara Herrnstein Smith, who relates narrative discourse to the act of storytelling, placing an emphasis on "narrative's requirement for a teller and a listener, a writer and a reader, a communion of sorts"' (Charon, 2008, p. 52).

Essential to narrative medicine is the concept of *close reading*, which Charon defines as:

> the kind of reading taught in graduate programs in literature in which the reader, as a matter of habit, pays attention not only to the words and the plot but to all aspects of the literary apparatus of a text … What texts "do", we all ultimately realize, they do in the resonance achieved between the words themselves and the worlds that surround them, elicit them, and are reflected and transformed by them.
>
> CHARON, 2008, p. 113

In her book *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness*, Charon dedicates a chapter to teaching healthcare providers and medical students the process of close reading. The act of close reading, she argues, makes providers "transparent to themselves as readers", and equips them "with the skills to open up the stories of their patients to nuanced understanding and appreciation" (Charon, 2008, p. 109). Learning how to closely read and interpret a patient or a person's story can be related to closely examining a piece of literature. This process assists a healthcare provider in better understanding the patient and the story being received. The reader, or listener, becomes an instrument for receiving the "meaning of another" (Charon, 2008, p. 132). Narrative medicine's tools of close reading and close listening augment the authentic and empathetic relationship between patients and clinicians.

Narrative medicine is an intersubjective field built on the tenets of numerous fields, including ethics, philosophy, literature and qualitative science. One of the most well-known authors to use this approach is sociologist Arthur Frank, who examines the nature of the suffering body in *The wounded storyteller* (2013). Frank breaks illness narratives down into three categories: restitution, quest and chaos. Wellness, according to Frank, is an unattainable ideal toward which the patient finds themself perpetually striving. We are constantly at odds with the chaos narrative, struggling to find meaning and order in the profoundly disorientating experience of illness. Frank writes (2013, p. 42): "Insofar as the regimen is the story, disciplined bodies can make 'good patients' in terms of their medical compliance". Frank's theoretical framework finds its way into the patient-provider encounter through this model of the perfect patient: compliant, taciturn and prone to improvement. Frank expands on his work in *The wounded storyteller* in *At the will of the body: Reflections on illness* (2002) and *Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology* (2010).

In 2017, the faculty of Columbia University's programme in narrative medicine published a collection of essays titled *The principles and practice of narrative medicine* (Charon *et al.*, 2017). The collection embodies the crystallised tenets of narrative medicine, guiding the reader through the core principles of intersubjectivity, philosophy and close reading. According to Charon (2017), close reading, the "signature method of narrative medicine" (p. 157), is a quintessential skill for healthcare providers. Charon (2017) writes: "The consequences of attentive and accurate listening in a clinical practice can include deep companionship between teller and listener, mutual investment, reciprocal clarity, and affiliation—ideally hallmarks of healthcare itself" (p. 157). Charon's claim is bolstered by subsequent chapters, particularly by Edgar Rivera Colón's work in qualitative research. Colón (2017) writes that a qualitative researcher becomes an "ethnographic witness" (p. 266) to the story of the patient, "whose

stories are rarely visible in the halls of power and decision making" (p. 266). Close reading provides healthcare practitioners with a replicable method of honouring the patient and of prioritising the patient's sovereignty and well-being throughout the care process.

Craig Irvine and Danielle Spencer provide a more comprehensive look into how working physicians can apply phenomenology to the clinical encounter. Narrative medicine challenges our assumptions about the hierarchical nature of the relationship between healthcare provider and patient. Rather than the hierarchical, the relationship is truly didactic, an intersubjective exchange between individuals. Philosopher Craig Irvine cites the work of Emmanuel Levinas, writing that he "brings us face-to-face with the other side of silence … And it is in this confrontation that we discover the clue to literature's efficacy as a tool for ethical reflection" (Irvine, 2005, p. 9). Instead of revealing the "Other", literature represents them. Attempting not only to understand, but to recognise the Other, is an essential part of the clinical encounter. The concept of the Other has evolved over the course of the 20th century, featuring heavily in the works of Levinas, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, and Judith Butler. However, Irvine cites the work of Merleau-Ponty as central in the conception of the Other in relation to the suffering body. According to Merleau-Ponty (2012, first edition, 1945), the act of communicating a thought to an Other is thought in itself; therefore, the Other is an essential reflection of embodied thought. Irvine and Spencer point out that this conception of *being-in-the-world* contrasts sharply with the Cartesian conception of the subject, isolated from the external world and wholly dependent on internal thought (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, p. 89).

At the opening of their chapter, Irvine and Spencer examine an excerpt from Audre Lorde's *A burst of light: Living with cancer*, in which Lorde details what Irvine and Spencer (2017) call the "pernicious confluence of medical paternalism and bias" (p. 64). Lorde's attitude toward her illness resists the image of model patient described by Frank. She describes her encounters with medical professionals as infantilising, dehumanising and discomforting. She writes: "I felt the battle lines being drawn up within my own body" (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, p. 64).

Irvine and Spencer (2017) recount several fictional narratives of clinical care, distilling these painful experiences into "agressions – both micro and macro – against an individual's personhood" (p. 66). These fictional narratives, often based on non-fictional experiences, offer the writers both perspective and space within which they can explore personal suffering (see, for example, Nellie Hermann's *The cure for grief* and Akhil Sharma's *Family life*). Beyond diagnosis and treatment, illness is a deeply personal experience. In *The illness*

narratives: Suffering, healing and the human condition, Arthur Kleinman (1989) calls illness an "innately human experience" (p. 3). The lived illness, as opposed to disease, is not a discrete event, but an ongoing narrative, with effects on the individual, on one's community, and on one's environment.

The hospital itself represents a kind of inevitable, ideological violence on the body. Authors like Audre Lorde and Akhil Sharma recount illness as a literal and metaphorical destruction of the body and, by Merleau-Ponty's reasoning, of the self. In the hospital, time is the scarcest resource; patients find themselves reduced to their various ailments, simultaneously witnessing and falling victim to the dissection of their bodies from their consciousnesses. For example, during hospitalisation, the patient may be re-termed "the knee in room 3" (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, p. 68). In doing so, the body is reduced to an amalgamation of malfunctioning parts, mysteries to be solved (or not solved) in disparate sections of the hospital. Irvine and Spencer delve more deeply into the mind-body dichotomy, stemming from Plato and early philosophy, into current structures in medical education. Exploring the work of doctor-philosophers Francis Peabody, Eric Cassell, and Samuel Shem, Irvine and Spencer argue that illness affects both the body and mind as one and that the emotional life of the patient is also at risk when the body is faced with physical disease. The works of these two writers are valuable accounts of healthcare and medical education from doctors themselves, who simultaneously experience and bear witness to the vigour of acting as a healthcare provider. Most notably, Cassell argues that the suffering of the body and mind are inextricable; that the treatment of a physical illness invariably has an effect on the patient's emotional wellbeing (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, p. 71).

Irvine and Spencer (2017) argue that, while diagnosis is often "abstracted from the particulars of the life of the one who suffers" (p. 75), diagnosis and treatment are not solely reductive and harmful to the patient's emotional wellbeing. Diagnosis also makes sense of the incoherence of human life, giving name and vocabulary to a nameless, unassailable threat. This constant push and pull between abstraction and coherence has its roots as far back as Plato's metaphor of "The cave" (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, p. 73). Irvine and Spencer characterise Plato's philosophy as driven to "free the soul from the body, with body/ emotion/ disease/ mortality on one side and soul/ rationality/ purity/ immortality on the other" (p. 77). The soul is bound to the body only at the fault of the individual who lacks the discipline to transcend the earthly needs of the corporeal.

This "oppositional dualism" (Irvine & Spencer, 2017, pp. 80–82) haunts the philosophy of the mind and body all the way from Descartes to present-day educational structures, whereby students of medicine dissect corpses with human features of faces; hands; and feet, covered from view. The body is viewed

as fully disconnected from the mind, a Cartesian grid of material to be dissected and reassembled. Irvine and Spencer argue that philosopher Merleau-Ponty offers a helpful counterargument against Plato's profound distillation of the mind from the body: "This overthrow reorients our relation to the abstractions of science, making them secondary to our primary experience, which is *fundamentally* embodied" (p. 87, emphasis in original).

Irvine and Spencer (2017) detail the ways in which speech and gesture embody and encompass consciousness, rather than inhibiting it. They write, "all speech is a bodily gesture – an elaboration of our embodied being-in-the-world" (p. 89). Each new experience becomes a part of ourselves and our relationship to the world. Our bodies are not just bundles of cells belonging to us, they are us. This way of thinking "reunit[es] the ill body with lived experience" (Irvine & Spencer, p. 94) and introduces us as patients, caregivers, and individuals to a new method of enacting our own existence: a new way of "singing the world" (p. 92). Irvine and Spencer further argue that an understanding of the *phenomenology of illness* is essential to the full and effective practice of medicine, with an understanding that the technical elements of bodily care are part of a larger picture. This unity between narrative and body is highlighted even more strongly in narratives of mental illness, in which the mind and body are often inextricable.

3 Rachel's Reflection on Her Illness Narrative

In reflection upon my own illness narrative, shared in the introduction to this chapter, I do not imagine myself to be a network of misfiring and malfunctioning cells and synapses. This chapter is not just an academic foray into a structure of thinking, it is the application of this structure to my lived experience. This, for me, is part of narrative medicine's core. I am my lived experience, and my bodily sovereignty cannot be taken from me. My illness is not my identity, but it is part of my constantly developing narrative, my overflowing vocabulary for the world around me. When we set out to write this chapter, we hoped that we may inspire our readers to strive for a more humanistic method of being-in-the-world, of seeing the suffering of their bodies and minds not as flaws, but as traits, as chapters in the ever-evolving story of life.

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CHAPTER 15

Can TV and Film Help Us to Understand Suicide Better?

Gavin Fairbairn

Abstract

In this chapter I discuss the idea that those who want a better understanding of suicide and a range of related human acts, including attempted suicide; gestured suicide and cosmic roulette, can learn a lot from the ways that such acts are treated in fiction and, in particular, in film. In doing so, I focus mainly on *Flowers*, a six-part television drama from the UK's Channel 4, which is very funny, but also full of pathos and the ability both to move and challenge us to rethink how we view such acts. The drama and the humour in the series emerge from the chaotic and disconnected life of the Flowers family. The first episode opens with the attempted suicide, or what seems to be the attempted suicide, of Maurice Flowers, husband of Deborah. In the last episode of the series, Maurice finds himself berated for his selfishness in having done such a thing, without considering the effects that might have resulted in his family had he been successful.

Key Words

Suicide – attempted suicide – cosmic roulette – gestured suicide – suicide's effects on others – *Flowers* – *Reuben Reuben*

• • •

Suicide, the intentional attempt to end one's life because one wishes to be dead, is part of the experience of a surprisingly large number of people. Even most of those who never have a friend or loved one, a colleague or a neighbour, who kills themself or acts in a way that seems to have been intended to achieve their death, will come across suicide at second-hand, whether through media reports, or through contact with others who have been directly affected by it. Contact with suicide, attempts at suicide, thoughts of suicide and with

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the effects that suicide and similar human acts can have on others, may be fairly frequent for some people, including those who work in mental health settings.

Intentional acts by which a person deliberately ends his own life, whether by his own hand, or that of others, have profound effects on those that are left behind, as do acts that both resemble suicide and end in death, though they were not intended to do so. That is why everyone who is likely to come across such acts or across people who may contemplate arranging their own death, including doctors, social workers and nurses; police officers, therapists and counsellors, should take the time to understand as well as they can what such behaviour involves; what motivates it; what it means or might mean to those who engage in it, and the effects that suicidal self-harm can have on people other than those who enact it. One way in which they might sharpen up the ways they think about and attempt to make sense of suicide and similar acts, is by engaging carefully with the ways that they are treated in fiction of all kinds, including novels and short stories, poetry; theatre, film and television. Through their imagined accounts, fictional writers often take us right to the heart of what suicide and related acts are about, in challenging, but helpful ways.

In this chapter, I focus attention on some examples of the ways in which suicidal and apparently suicidal acts, and the human dramas that surround them, are portrayed in film and on TV. In doing so, I shall pay particular attention to how suicide is treated in *Flowers* (Sharpe, 2016), a six-episode comedy drama on UK television, featuring a dysfunctional family called the Flowers, from whom it takes its name. In the first episode the father, Maurice Flowers, a children's author, attempts to kill himself. I say "attempts to kill himself" as if, from what we see and hear, we know that he was trying to arrange his death but failed to do so. As it happens, I am convinced both that he had been contemplating suicide and that he acted so as to bring about his death, even though the script does not provide enough clues to be sure that suicide really was his intention.

In the sixth and last episode of *Flowers* we meet suicide twice more. First, through the ears of Maurice's estranged wife Deborah, as she listens to a recording in which he communicates some emotional and personal truths that he has found difficult to share face to face, including his botched attempt to hang himself, which he had disguised by claiming that his mother had tried to kill herself. Secondly, during an encounter between Maurice and Barry – a builder who has been carrying out work for Maurice and Deborah's neighbour. Barry is besotted with Deborah, and forces Maurice to listen to an account of the dreadful way in which his own wife ended her life, as a way of drawing his

attention to the effects that suicide can have on those left behind. I say more about these scenes later.

A writer of children's books, who believes that he is a failure at life as well as his job, Maurice Flowers lives alongside the other members of his dysfunctional family in ways that offer great opportunities for the scriptwriter's comic genius. Actually, I think it is fair to say that the whole Flowers family live alongside one another, rather than living together, such is the level of confusion and disconnection between them.

As the first episode of *Flowers* opens, we are cast in the role of bystanders as Maurice wakens from a disturbing daydream. Standing up, he acts decisively, walking through his extensive garden, to a tree where he throws a noose over a sturdy looking branch. We watch as he places the noose around his neck. Plainly, or so it seems, Maurice plans to hang himself, and this seems to be confirmed when we see his feet move on the chair he is standing on, then the rope twitching in a way that leads us to believe that he is about to die. Visually this is very similar to the last moments of a scene in a movie I discuss elsewhere (Fairbairn, 2013), in which we witness the final actions of Gowan McGland, a womanising poet, who dies after standing on a chair and placing a noose round his neck with the intention of hanging himself. However, in the movie *Reuben Reuben* (Miller, 1983), it is McGland's legs and feet that we see twitching, rather than the rope from which he has hung himself.

McGland's death comes at the end of a scene during which we witness his apparent change of heart as he moves from the intention to die, to the decision to live. Having made the preparations for suicide, he is standing on a chair, drunk, noose round his neck, recording what began as a final message for his ex-wife, but evolves into a one-sided discussion that touches on their relationship as well as his poetry. Revisiting an unfinished poem, he says:

> You know Edith I very much thought – my last regret is the poem I never finished – God, do you remember that one, the one that we both liked so much:
> Come. Let us spread a picnic on the precipice.
> Eat, drink and be merry with our backs to the abyss.
> Till in that dusk, where bats cannot be told from swallows,
> gifts from threats
> will banish solemn songs like this.

Pleased with these lines, McGland continues:

> "Banish solemn songs like this". I could never finish it, could I? Good God damn it, could never, never finish it. Hmm. Hopeless.

Then, a new thought comes to him, a way forward with the poem:

> This is our hopeless heaven.
> These flowers our eyes have watered.
>
> That's quite good. That's quite good Edith. Eh?
>
> These flowers our eyes have watered
>
> Wine drawn from our veins.
> Tunes piped from hollowed bones
> And gaiety pouring from every wound.

Eh, Edith, that's eh "gaiety pouring from every wound", that's good Edith, i'n't it? (Miller, 1983)

When he prepared the noose and threw it over the beam in his living room, stood on a chair and placed it round his neck, it seemed pretty clear that, drunk or not, Gowan McGland really did intend to kill himself. However, listening as he records his message to Edith, we find ourselves wondering whether, before making the preparations to hang himself, he had really thought things through as well as he might have done. Indeed, the more of his message to Edith he records, the more he seems to be talking himself out of the desire for death. Finding the continuation to his remembered poem to his liking, he instructs Edith to take care of it, saying, "Edith you'd better type, eh, you'd better type that out and send it to someone" (*ibid.*).

Then admonishing her in a conversational tone, almost as if they were in the same room having an ordinary conversation, he says, "Ach, you're so bloody hopeless, I'll do it myself" and begins to question what he is doing, asking:

> Edith, does this mean then that, really, I'm too chicken to go through with this then? Think it does Edith. Eh?
> Ach well, why should I? Why the hell should I? Goddam it. Bloody hell.
> Do you think there are still poems to be written Edith? There are still women to be made love to? (*ibid.*)

By this point it seems clear that McGland has embraced the idea that even for him there might be something left to live for, before the door opens and,

unfortunately for him, Reuben, his next-door neighbour's old English sheepdog, comes into the room and ambles across the room to greet him. As he does so, McGland utters his last words, "Oh hello Reuben my friend – oh shit!" (*ibid.*) Jumping up to greet him, Reuben pushes the chair over; then the camera moves to McGland's twitching feet, in an alarmingly long shot, as he dies. And so McGland, who probably set out with the intention to end his life, but changed his mind through reflection on things that for him make life worth living, including poems to be written and women to be loved, dies because of a dog's enthusiastic greeting.

■ Reference Sharp (2016) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

Let me return to *Flowers* (Sharp, 2016) and to Maurice, who like Gowan McGland, stood on a chair with a noose around his neck, apparently with the intention of hanging himself, but who, unlike McGland, does not die, instead falling to the ground with a bump when the branch from which he is hanging breaks. Even though his situation as a man who not only believes he is a failure at both life and his job, but seems unable even to kill himself, is tragic, we laugh when he mutters "For fuck's sake" (*ibid.*) as, standing up, he removes the noose from his neck. Were this a chapter about humour, I would perhaps try to work out what makes us laugh here, but since my focus is suicide in film, I'll focus instead on whether standing on a chair with a noose round one's neck necessarily means that one really wants to die? Though Maurice's hanging incident is funny, it raises serious questions about what he really intended when he walked to the tree and threw the noose over it.

For example, rather than setting out with the desire to kill himself, like others who are referred to as having "attempted suicide", Maurice might have been gesturing suicide, staging an apparent attempt on his life, in order to bring about change in others; to make them realise how desperately unhappy he was, or to make them feel guilty about the possibility that the way they had treated him had contributed to that unhappiness. Or he may have been engaging in "cosmic roulette", in which a distressed person, having toyed with the idea of arranging their death, acts in a way that could end their life, but without the resolve actually to end it. They might, for example, whether consciously or subconsciously, have chosen a branch from which to hang a noose (and themself) that, though sturdy, seemed to have some potential to break under their full weight, thus reducing the odds that they would die. Or perhaps, like some who survive what look like attempts at suicide, he just wanted to escape from the misery and confusion of his life, by "being dead for a while", rather than wanting to end it altogether.

As I said earlier, I am inclined to believe that Maurice Flowers had been contemplating suicide because, for example, just before we see the twitching rope, we see his feet on the chair, apparently deliberately knocking it away.

Despite this, however, I find myself wondering what to make of his behaviour after falling to the ground when the branch breaks. As he walks disconsolately back towards the house, carefully recoiling the rope, rather than looking for a stronger branch to try again, it is difficult not to form the view that he is more upset about what he perceives as his failure, not only as a father, a husband and an author, but even as a suicide, than he is at finding himself still alive. Perhaps, even if he really did set out to achieve his death, he was glad to find that he had failed. In that case, he would share something with Gloria, in whose suicide I once intervened, having broken into her home because I had reason to believe she might have harmed herself. Finding her unconscious, lying in a pool of vomit and blood, I arranged for her to be taken to the local hospital where, shortly after regaining consciousness ten days later, she told me that though she really had intended to kill herself, she was glad I had stopped her.

Let us now turn to the final episode in *Flowers*, and, first of all, to a scene in which Deborah Flowers hears her husband "confess" to having attempted to kill himself, as she listens to a recorded message from him, upon which she has inadvertently stumbled while methodically sorting through a bag of historic family tapes, re-living episodes from their life together. We eavesdrop as she listens to Maurice's message:

> If you're listening to this then I probably haven't managed to tell you in person, or maybe I'm dead or something. Em. I love you; I love you. I'm sorry that I'm a coward and that I'm not a good husband to you and that I'm not a good father to our kids and I'm sorry for being such a difficult part of your life. I'm sorry for lying to you about my mother … because, my mother didn't try to hang herself, I tried to hang myself – in our garden. And I didn't know how to tell you and so here I am – on a fuckin' tape … which is not how I wanted to do it. Just please know that I'm not unhappy because of you. I'm just – it's just who I am; I guess. And I don't know how to change that. I don't know how; I don't know what I can do to make it stop. Every morning I wake up and the first thing I think of is killing myself. I feel exhausted all of the time. I find it impossible to gain any kind of pleasure from anything; even when I think of the things that should make me the happiest – when I think of our love and of our children; when I think of anything that we've ever done together. It's as if I've been given a set amount of life assigned to me and I've used it all up. There's nothing left.
>
> SHARPE, 2016, Episode 6.

It is worth noting that, having recorded this message, Maurice went to great lengths (which underpin some of the most comic episodes in the series) to

try to avoid Deborah listening to it. It is a kind of failed suicide note in which he not only communicates his intention to kill himself, his reasons for doing so and the fact that he has failed to do so, but apologises for his behaviour, his cowardice, and what he views as his personal failures and failings. By watching and listening to Deborah's response to Maurice's message, we vicariously experience something of the distress that can be caused to others by suicidal acts and intentions enacted or even simply spoken by loved ones, even when, as in this case, they do not result in death.

Suicide, as I said earlier, can have profound effects on others. Though there is a sense in which it does not harm those who enact it, it is important that everyone, and perhaps especially those who contemplate ending their lives, should know that suicide almost always harms others; both those who love the suicider and those for whom the suicider is significant for some other reason.

The effects of suicide on those who love, or care for, or are closely involved with, someone who kills himself can be truly devastating and I end this chapter by sharing the scene, to which I alluded earlier, in which Barry the builder berates Maurice for attempting to hang himself, and gives him a blow-by-blow account of the circumstances of his own wife Audrey's suicide. In doing so, he illustrates in a graphic and moving way, both to Maurice and to us as viewers, the distress that the suicide of a loved one can cause.

Maurice has arrived at a hospital to visit his daughter, but before he can get to her he is accosted by Barry, who is angry about what he takes to be the selfishness and lack of regard for Deborah that Maurice demonstrated when he tried to end his life. Barry tells Maurice that he wants to show him where Audrey died and begins to manhandle him towards the roof of the hospital, saying, "You are hurting Deborah and it's making me very angry … Deborah is the purest, most giving, patient lady I have ever met". (Sharpe, 2016, Episode 6)

As they step out onto the roof of the hospital, Barry continues: "I was in the canteen buying a cheese slice and an apple". Removing a kitchen knife from his jacket, and holding it in two hands pointed towards Maurice, he explains:

> I say apple, because that's why I had this knife … apples were the one thing she would eat that were actually good for her, but she wouldn't eat them unless I sliced them up first.

Though, on seeing the knife, Maurice is understandably alarmed, he asks, "Why do you need such a big knife to slice up an apple?" Barry explains:

> Because it's what I had to hand. You're not at your most practical when your wife's just tried to kill herself again, you know?

> … It was Christmas, Maurice. So I made her an egg nog, because I thought, well you know, she deserves a treat, but she were getting too carried away, you know with the egg nog, because it is quite rich isn't it … She drank eight litres of it while I was busy with the sprouts.
>
> SHARPE, 2016, Episode 6

When Maurice asks Barry why he made eight litres of egg nog, he responds:

> I just got the quantities wrong so I had to keep adding ingredients to … to … to … to balance it out and she must have found this in the bag, because …

Moving across the roof, he continues:

> They discovered her – oh, round about here. And she'd obviously been squirming for quite a while, because there was blood everywhere – and … and all her insides were out like big sloppy wires, all tangled up like, you know when you can't see where the knots are? Except this was my wife. [silence] …
> So, I carry this knife with me at all times. Do you know why I carry it with me Maurice?
> … I carry it with me to remind me …
> … that it was hard. Because if I didn't remember how hard it was, I … I didn't think I could cope with her not being here anymore. It was exhausting, actually.
> So, I can't know how you feel Maurice, but I know how Deborah feels. I know how she would have felt.
> And I keep saying to myself it … it'll go away soon this, this feeling after, after a few months, a few years perhaps. But it never does.
> This is what you leave behind.
>
> SHARPE, 2016, Episode 6

This remarkable scene, funny and moving by turns, allows us to learn something about the ways in which Barry has been affected by his wife's death, and to experience, through his telling, a little of what he must have suffered. However, by helping us to imagine his experience, it arguably also allows us to develop some insight into the suffering of others in similar circumstances, as a result of the suicidal acts of those they love, including the suffering that Deborah might have experienced had Maurice successfully hanged himself.

1 Concluding Remarks

The imagined accounts of fictional writers often take us right to the heart of what human experience is about; this is as true of suicide and related acts and the network of human experiences and interactions that surround them, as it is of acts of other kinds, including acts of love and kindness; cruelty, betrayal and deceit. That is why I believe that engaging carefully with the ways in which suicide, and apparently suicidal acts, are portrayed in literature, film and TV, can allow us to go beyond a simplistic reading of the apparent facts, thus developing more nuanced understandings of the meanings of such acts and better awareness of the effects that they can have on others.

In this chapter, I have tried to support my suggestion that those who are likely to come across suicide, and other apparently suicidal acts, could benefit from reflecting on the ways in which they are portrayed in TV and film, by focussing attention on a few scenes.

For example, in discussing the death, by hanging, of Gowan McGland in the film *Reuben Reuben* (Miller, 1983), I implied that, though his death might have begun with a suicidal intention (albeit one that was fuelled if not driven by alcohol), in the end, it may well have been a horrid tragedy in which, having set out on a suicidal trajectory, an accidental meeting with a dog, rather than the wish to die, was what finally decided his fate. In discussing the apparently suicidal act in which Maurice Flowers engaged at the beginning of the black comedy that shares his name, I argued that, like many people who act in similar ways in real life, even if he was contemplating suicide when he acted, Maurice might not have been totally committed to achieving his death. Interestingly, a conversation with the scriptwriter and director of this wonderful TV series suggests that, despite having created Maurice's character, he is also somewhat uncertain of what was really in his mind as, rope in hand, he walked to the tree to enact his plan.

Space has prevented me from elaborating on my view that witnessing Deborah Flower's response to her husband's "failed suicide message", allows us vicariously to experience something of the distress that she felt. However, as one who has had more than fleeting contact with suicide and the effects it can have on others, I think that both Deborah's response to Maurice's words, and his words themselves, have the ring of truth about them. Barry's graphic story about his wife's death, to which I alluded above, also has a level of authenticity that makes it hard to cast aside, despite its being written in a way that makes it difficult not to laugh at it at the same time.

I am, of course, well aware that for every piece of literature and every film or TV drama in which suicide and other apparently suicidal acts are sensitively

and carefully handled, there will be another or others in which they are handled in ways that are unhelpful, insensitive and ethically questionable. However, my hope is that, in this short chapter, I have managed, at least, to draw attention to the possibility that within our reach there are dramatic resources that can help us to think more clearly about these most distressing of human phenomena.

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PART 4

Cultural Perspectives

Introduction to Part 4

Theresa Edlmann

Cultural narratives grow out of stories about place and belonging that emerge over time. The chapters in this section reflect on how themes of context, relationships and history become interwoven in stories about love, identity, belonging and place. This series of chapters, focusing on narratives and cultural perspectives, begins with Joanna Davidson's account of how the songs composed by rural women in the Jola communities of Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, become a form of abbreviated anthems about people. As songs are sung in rice paddies, over food or palm wine, they become a form of intersubjective social commentary in which ethical dilemmas, pragmatic options and transformative possibilities are woven.

In the second chapter, Brendon Briggs describes how he, as a traveller to East Africa, embarked on a collaborative project in which stories of love were used to disrupt the long-held traditions of western travellers seeing Africans and their stories as somehow dark or diminished. Interactive workshops and writing exercises culminated in a series of fictional stories that place universal themes of romantic love in the context of contemporary Tanzania. Keven Fletcher (Chapter 19) draws on his experience of working in the field of education in Canada to provide an important theoretical framing of how narratives are not culturally neutral and neither do they carry equal levels of social and political power. Using First Nation wisdom stories as the focus of his discussion, Keven explores some of the moral and ethical concerns of cultural appropriation in using wisdom stories, providing a series of guidelines for thinking through how to engage in this field work without replicating historical and colonial cultural tropes.

The next chapter moves to the island of Cyprus, where Stephanie Jacobs undertook a process of ethnographic research into the effects of the 1974 war on her grandfather's generation of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In a context where strong beliefs about the schisms between the two groups currently prevail, Stephanie unearthed a history for her grandfather's generation of religious tolerance between Greeks and Turks, as well as deep friendship; love; cooperation; shared cultural celebrations; and a deep sense of loss after the war. The cultural history that she has brought to light is timely, as Cypriots grapple with the possibility of reunification.

The final chapter in this section draws notions of culture and narrative into the digital age. Melissa Lee Price and Michael Ogden explore how migrants'

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stories about identity formation can become participatory; user-driven; and interactive documentaries, in which storytellers are both producers and users of stories – thus becoming *produsers*. The historically rooted and transnational nature of people's journeys in the highly digitised and interactive context of the twenty-first century means stories can be malleable and emergent in ways that give rise to new cultural and storytelling conventions.

CHAPTER 16

"People Insult Me – Oh My!": Reflections on Jola Women's Story-Songs in Rural West Africa

Joanna Davidson

Abstract

Jola women in Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, regularly compose short story-songs about themselves that become a kind of abbreviated anthem associated with a particular individual. Friends and neighbours all know each other's songs and often sing them while working in the rice paddies or gathered around a collective rice bowl and some palm wine after a long day's work. Usually only two lines, these story-songs encapsulate a moment or episode in each woman's life, often encoding a rebuke to someone who has offended them or cryptically revealing that they have overheard gossip about themselves. This mode of storytelling highlights the intersubjective dimensions of Jola social life in ways that evoke Hannah Arendt's notion of storytelling as a form of ethical discourse. Through a nuanced interpretation of Jola women's story-songs, I propose to expand our understanding of where stories might reside, how they are pragmatically deployed, and how a particular form of storytelling might reveal more general insights into the transformative power of stories.

Key Words

Politics of storytelling – intersubjectivity – anthropology – West Africa – secrecy – ethical discourse

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Dúdú, nighanhoulò; Sulen naiabé [*anarre angarre*]
Sulen naghar ehloka akan d'elupool

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You are a fool; Sulen married a woman
Sulen put a dog in his house[1]

∴

I started listening to Jola women's songs from my very first day of fieldwork in 2001 when I joined a group of women to harvest ripe rice at the height of the dry season. We spent the day in the rice paddies, working our way through waist-high rows of swaying rice plants, each of us cutting handful after handful with a small knife. The day was filled with talk and singing, mostly singing, none of which I understood. Fifteen years later, after countless days and weeks and months living among Jola villagers in Guinea-Bissau, working with them in the rice paddies and oil-palm forests, becoming enmeshed in their families' lives, and having my family become part of their extended kin networks, I am still trying to figure out what these songs are all about.

This chapter explores some facets of these songs, which, I will argue, are really stories.[2] To demonstrate this, I will unravel what is behind a few exemplary songs and then consider what work these story-songs might do; that is, how they tell us some things particular about Jola society, but also other things much more general about storytelling; social relations; politics; and ethics.

First, a little background: Jola are an agrarian, rice-cultivating ethnic group residing along the Upper Guinea Coast, from The Gambia, through southern Senegal and into Guinea-Bissau.[3] Jola compose and sing many different kinds of songs for different occasions and purposes.[4] The songs that concern me in this chapter, called *uñagau*, are composed and sung by married women.[5]

1 Jola woman's song, recorded by the author in the village of Esana, Guinea-Bissau, March 2016. All subsequent songs in the text were recorded by the author in the same village and time period, although some have been recorded previously (and repeatedly) over the past 15 years. All translations of the Jola songs into English have been done by the author.

2 There is a rich anthropological literature on women's poems and songs, much of which I use as inspiration here, although space constraints do not allow for an adequate review and parsing of this scholarship. See, for example, Abu-Lughod (1986); Ahearn (1998); Briggs (1992); Irvine (1996); Joseph (1980); McIntosh (2005); and McNee (2000).

3 For more general information about the Jola (also referred to as Diola, Djola and Felupe), see Davidson (2016); Linares (1992); Baum (1999) and Mark (1985).

4 There are, for instance, funeral songs; *kon-kon* songs; *harimanahu* songs; and *bugarabu* songs, see Davidson (2016); Baum (1999); and Linares (1992).

5 *Uñagau* (singular: *kanyangaku*) is the Jola word for songs, generically. But it is interesting to note that the same word also means name (as in, *Kanyangaku katai*? [What is your name?]). I do not have space in this chapter to draw out the implications of this double meaning,

They are usually just two lines and are sung regularly by the women members of one's in-married work group, who are generally one's closest friends and confidants. They are sung when women work together in the forests and paddies, when women visit each other on the rest day of the Jola six-day week (*hiyeyehu*) and at collective gatherings like weddings or sometimes funerals. Every woman in the group knows every other woman's song.[6]

The story-songs are predominantly about two subjects: gossip and marriage. Most songs refer to an overheard insult and are sung in such a way as to inform, without ever directly confronting, the person who voiced the insult that the subject of said insult is aware of it. Songs about marriage typically refer to a disagreement between husband and wife, and when Jola discuss this kind of song they use the word "sing" as an active, head-on verb: "She "sang" her husband", rather than "she sang "to" or "about" her husband".

For example:

> [*Sambu*], *bussonhabé bubaé-ban non budjandu*
> [*Sambu*], *bussonhabé kamunhaku*
>
> [Sambu], our marriage is over, like a fulcrum shovel
> [Sambu], marriage is just for suffering.
>
> Recorded by the author in the village of Esana, Guinea-Bissau, March 2016; translated by the author.

This song was composed and sung by Maribel, who is known sometimes as Sambu, her lineage name.[7] Maribel is married to Abayam, who is known for being hot-blooded. During one of their many fights, Abayam told Maribel that their marriage was over "like a *bujandu"* (an abbreviation for *bujandabu*, which is the long-handled, iron-tipped fulcrum shovel that men use to till the rice paddies). A man will use his *bujandabu*, and use it hard, until it is worn out, after which he will toss it away and get another one. So Abayam, in a fit of rage, tells Maribel that their marriage is over, like a *bunjandabu*, since it is broken, it should be tossed away. The second line is Maribel's response: Marriage is just for suffering. In this line, she borrows the sentiment of suffering, *kamunhaku*,

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although readers might pick up on some possible links between "singing" someone and "naming" someone through the explanations of story-songs in this text.

6 Jola women typically have two songs that they and their fellow work group members regularly sing. Some women may have more than two and some women may have only one. Songs tend to last a very long time (most of the ones I know have been sung for at least the fifteen years that I have been going back and forth to this region), although some may be put out of circulation, particularly when they contain a name or nickname of someone who has died.

7 All personal names have been changed.

that is often articulated by Jola men and women to refer to their backbreaking labour in the rice paddies and applies it to marriage. Although Jola complain about their work, they are deeply committed to it. Suffering (in the rice paddies) is just part and parcel of what it means to be Jola, and other forms of work that may be physically easier just do not count as work; there are even different Jola words for them (Davidson, 2009; Linares, 1985). So, in the second line, Maribel responds to her husband by transforming the metaphor; that marriage is not a *bujandabu* that you can simply toss away, marriage is suffering, and, like Jola agricultural labour, you just have to keep doing it, even if it hurts.

When discussing this song, Jola commentators often add to the literal meaning of the words by stressing that, since Maribel and Abaym have children together, Abayam cannot treat Maribel like a *bujandabu*. This extends the importance of marriage into the family realm, adding other stakeholders, the children. Jola marriage (*bussonhabé*) is not just about husband and wife; it is, most importantly, about physical and social reproduction, creating and nurturing the next generation of Jola, a process in which a Jola woman is much more than a *bujandabu* that prepares the soil for transplanting. Therefore, she cannot simply be thrown out and replaced. As this example shows, these songs use key Jola terms that, as all good stories do, cleverly allude to meanings beyond their proximate span.

So, what happens when Maribel "sings" Abayam? Without ever directly confronting him, which would likely incite his bad temper and might lead to further beatings, Maribel composes and sings this song, incorporating Abayam's own hurtful words and responding to them by transforming them. In just two lines, she has told not only the story of her marriage, but the story of marriage, and she has done so by evoking attributes that Jola value most; hard work; suffering; and dedication to family. A member of Maribel's work group once told me:

> There was one day we were over there [at Maribel & Abayam's house]; and Maribel sang this song. And Abayam was there, he was there that day. Maribel sang, and Abayam said, "So, Maribel, it's me you're singing. That day that we fought, that's what you're singing about". Maribel didn't say anything; she didn't say anything to him. She already sang. All of her feelings were in that song
>
> Recorded by the author, 2016.

Like most Jola women's songs, whether about marriage or gossip, one of the purposes is to address a social or marital problem, a violation or wrongdoing, and ultimately to change the very conditions of the relationship, but all indirectly. This is a very Jola way of doing things (Davidson, 2010) and in Maribel's

case it seems to have worked. When I asked, many years after I first heard this song, whether Abayam had stopped beating Maribel, one of our mutual friends told me, "Yes, it's improved. Because he's been sung".

1 "You are Talking about Me"

Djidjam mumban de djilob
Anhol Essimena omé

You are talking
Essimena's child is here.

Recorded by the author in the village of Esana, Guinea-Bissau, March 2016; translated by the author.

This is Yayó's song. On the surface, it appears so banal; it does not seem to tell us anything. But it is a perfect example of the "overheard gossip" trope. In this case, some backstory is necessary to understand what is going on. Yayó's husband, Ekungai, was engaged to another young woman, Nelita. But then he took up with Yayó and they had a baby together, after which he broke off the engagement with Nelita and married Yayó. Jola engagements are, or, until recently, were (see Davidson, 2016) taken very seriously; they involved many years of deepening ties between the two families, quite an investment (usually of pigs) and the development of a tight-knit, life-long group of young men and women (*buyabu*) who were "declared", that is, formally engaged, together. So, it is no small thing to break off an engagement, although, like anywhere else in the world, things happen. Love is complicated. After Ekungai broke off his engagement with Nelita, people gossiped, "Yayó went and stole Nelita's marriage". This kind of talk plagued Yayó, although it was of course never said to her face. In this song, without ever mentioning the specific episode, she lets people know that she is aware of this gossip: *Djidjam mumban de djilob* [You are talking about me], inferring that she has heard what they are saying. Then she sings: "Essimena's child is here". Essimena is the nickname of her paternal uncle and paternal uncles are generally thought to be quite protective of their brothers' children. But, by saying Essimena's child is here, Yayó is flagging that she has not just one, but two (and by implication, many more) relatives-cum-allies on her side. She does not say: I am here, and I heard what you said about me. She says, my cousin, which, since that particular cousin is not named, suggests there is more than just the one, is here; that is, he or she is present, is on my side, has told me what you've said, and so you can't just keep talking behind my back because there are ears out there on my side. In two short, cryptic lines,

Yayó has re-positioned herself as someone who, instead of simply being defined as one who damages social relations (by "stealing Nelita's marriage") is also embedded in healthy, active, protective ones (such as, uncles and cousins). This, of course, is what stories do best, or at least good stories; they tell multiple truths; they create multidimensional characters; they refuse flattened or simplified understandings; and, ideally, they transform the listener through an intersubjective experience. Somehow, Yayó's story-song does all of this in seven words. But, of course, that only works when one knows the context, the backstory; when one knows not only the nickname of a paternal uncle, but what the social role of a paternal uncle indexes. Which is to say; these story-songs work because among Jola, where all of these things are known without having to be said, all you need is seven words to tell a much longer story.

2 "The Story is a Secret"

Djiguelom oh, ai-Mama
Enokenua sanghulè

People insult me, oh my!
I've never entered their house.

Recorded by the author in the village of Esana, Guinea-Bissau, March 2016; translated by the author.

This is NhaBuhel's song, and it is another example of the most common plot line; people are talking about me, and not so nicely. But what does the fact that "people insulted NhaBuhel" have to do with her not entering their houses? Again, some context: NhaBuhel is known as someone who has difficulty obtaining enough rice. She works hard, like everyone else, but she is chronically struggling to get enough to eat. As one of her friends told me:

> If she goes to transplant rice, she gets some, but she doesn't get as much as other people. Then, people insult her by saying, "NhaBuhel doesn't have rice, NhaBuhel doesn't have rice, NhaBuhel doesn't have rice".
>
> Recorded by the author in the village of Esana, Guinea-Bissau, March 2016; translated by the author.

This is one of the most offensive things one can say about someone else in rural Jola-land. As one of my most trusted interlocutors often stressed to me, "If someone insults you that you don't have rice – oh! – that kind of thing is a secret! You can't say that in front of someone; only behind their back. You

would never say it directly to someone … You'll just say it to someone else, about someone else behind their back".

And, of course, whatever is said behind someone's back eventually meets them head-on. So NhaBuhel acknowledges in the first line, without ever mentioning rice, that she has heard what people are saying about her. But, like the last two songs, she uses the second line to complicate things, to undo what has been done to, or at least said about her. In Jola villages, one very rarely enters inside anyone else's house, even close neighbours and friends. Visiting happens outside on the veranda; the only time one would enter a house is to speak privately to its occupants, and one of the only subjects that requires that kind of privacy is to ask for rice because you have none. This is a deeply shameful admission; Jola pride themselves on self-sufficiency through hard work and begging for rice is a simply awful thing to come to. When NhaBuhel says, "I've never entered your house", she is refuting the implied claim that she does not have rice by saying, through cryptic, highly coded references, that she has never begged for rice.

Again, it is important to notice the distance travelled between the words and their meanings. Rice is not mentioned. Begging is not mentioned. But both are understood to be part of the story, the main part of the story, because NhaBuhel composed and sings this in a place where everyone knows that she is someone who has trouble getting rice, that people discuss this behind her back and that entering a house means something more than it does, say, when we do it. As one of my friends confirmed when I had a eureka moment in figuring out this song: "You see, it gives a hint, but not the whole story. The story is a secret".

3 Shadows, Shovels and Subjects

I want to propose a few possible paths for pursuing further analysis of these story-songs. But, like the songs themselves, at this point these are rather cryptic and suggestive.

First, from a literary perspective: What kinds of shadows do these stories cast? Stories are often mined for their use of foreshadowing, backshadowing, or even, following Gary Morson (1996), sideshadowing (when they hint at things outside the narrative itself). Even given their brevity, there are elements of all of these techniques in the songs, especially the latter two.

But I wonder if there might be another kind of shadowy device at play here, one that we can borrow from visual rather than literary artists; *chiaroscuro*, an Italian artistic term, which is meant to play up contrasts between light and dark. In this case, simplified as good and bad social or marital conduct, and

perhaps also evident in the contrast between first and second lines, the second line often inverting the meanings and metaphors of the first. *Chiaroscuro* is also meant to achieve a sense of multidimensionality, which is especially evident in Yayó's song.

Even more, each form of literary shadowing is premised on an understanding of time and authorial control. While foreshadowing and backshadowing are squarely within a linear framing of time, sideshadowing challenges this notion of time and, by implication, the relationship between cause and effect, as well as the artificiality of authorial control over the sequencing of events. Jola women's songs might hint at another orientation to time and causality. It seems that these songs have a rather peculiar relationship to time, for while each might have emerged from a specific incident, a marital conflict or gossipy neighbour overheard, they continue to be sung long after that incident has passed, and, in many cases, has been resolved. The shadow they cast on the conditions of their emergence is less a flashback than a flicker forward, a reminder of the consequences of gossip. Perhaps their anthem-like repetition suggests that they go beyond whatever the incident "in time" that provoked their composition, and serve as a timeless general prompt for healthy, or at least non-conflictual, social and marital relations.

This leads to a second possibility, which is inspired by Keith Basso's work among the Western Apache, and especially the way stories can lodge themselves in unusual, and often culturally-specific, places, a mountain; a ravine; a name; and a song. Among the Western Apache place-names, like, *Trail goes down between two hills*, are topographically anchored mnemonic pegs for stories that remind people how to "live right", that is, as an upstanding, ethical Apache (Basso, 1990). According to Basso, "Western Apaches evoke and manipulate the significance of local places to comment on the moral shortcomings of wayward individuals" (Basso, 1996, pp. 60–61). But if Western Apache stories are like arrows (Basso, 1996, p. 101), Jola story-songs are more like a *bujandabu*, that ubiquitous fulcrum shovel. You have to dig deeper than the surface words to know what they are really about, and they have the effect of upturning what seems to be solid ground, but in the process they pave the way for the ever-fragile seedlings of marriage and friendship to be transplanted in more fertile, although always vulnerable, terrain.

Like Western Apache stories, Jola women's songs are appreciated for their aesthetic qualities: their poetic choice of words; their oblique references; their melodic composition. But they are valued primarily for their social work, addressing damaging social and marital conduct indirectly; humorously; and restoratively, and thereby diffusing (another shadowy term), rather than further exacerbating, the inevitable tensions that arise in the fishbowl dynamics of rural life.

These story-songs, then, seem to marry the phenomenological with the pragmatic by changing both the feelings of the composer/singer in the face of hurt or anger or annoyance, as well as often changing the very conditions that provoked such feelings, all without a shred of direct confrontation. They take that transformative aspect of storytelling that has been recently trumpeted by so many, from, such as, advocates of narrative medicine; truth-and-reconciliation commissions; and peacebuilding enterprises, and bring it from those lofty heights right down into the nitty-gritty micro-politics of everyday marital and social relations.

It is important to emphasise, though, that they do so in a rather enigmatic way. And this brings me to my third and final intervention. An enigma, Julian Barnes reminds us, "is a puzzle you want to solve" (Barnes, 2012, p. 82). I think that the coded, oblique, enigmatic qualities of Jola story-songs are not primarily intended to keep anthropologists from penetrating them; they are a kind of invitation to listeners (those being sung) to solve the riddle. In this way, these story-songs manifest Hannah Arendt's notion of storytelling as a profoundly intersubjective endeavour (Arendt, 1958; Jackson, 2013). These story-songs do social and political work because they mediate between the private and public spheres, airing private secrets, whether about domestic abuse or love affairs or the lack of rice, for public consumption albeit in delicate, veiled ways. Like all good stories, they establish a relationship between storyteller and listener, but cleverly expand such intersubjectivity beyond just the dyad by insinuating or inserting nicknames of children, uncles, cousins, friends, even whole lineages.[8] In this way, these songs blur the line between self and other; common experiences take precedence over individuality. Is there much more we can ask a story to do?

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8 Also, although most of the songs are original compositions that emerge from a specific occurrence, some are borrowed or adopted; that is, even though they came out of someone else's experience, they speak to you and you take them on for yourself, or even give them to a friend. My own song came that way.

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CHAPTER 17

East African Stories of Love: Challenging Perspectives

Brendon Briggs

Abstract

While mediums and methods of storytelling often provide a moral compass, entertain, and transmit knowledge across generations and cultures, these shared narratives can nevertheless impact negatively on place, people, and culture. This chapter outlines a project that aimed to contribute to the challenge of redirecting outsider perception (and expectation) of Africa as a monolithic place of one billion starving and dying people in desperate need of the world's charity. Based in Tanzania and Zanzibar, the project method utilised individual and collaborative workshops as its primary focus. Participants were encouraged to invent their own characters informed by their personal, lifelong lived experiences, focusing on the subject of romantic love. And, though problematic, "love" is the universal mechanism for a positive rendering of these African stories. The workshops forming the heart of the process aimed to develop a collaborative storytelling technique that differs from the dominant imprinting of outsider expectations based on stereotypical notions of the "exotic other". The objective was to produce a creative, though generic, and transferable model of participatory storytelling that was personally informed by those whom it sought to represent.

Key Words

East Africa – auto/biography – autoethnography – positive storytelling – love stories – stereotypes – film – literature – journalism

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1 Representing Africa: Creating the West's African Character

The focus of this chapter is my creative, practice-based, doctoral project, *East African stories of love: Challenging perspectives*, based at Murdoch University,

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Australia. The project involved the creation of an ensemble narrative of four stories of love in East Africa, created by eight people, paired together, to explore their own potential love stories. This chapter offers an outline of the project's motives, design and experiences, including my own role and story as a researcher and storyteller creating a new form of Western travelogue. The final participatory fieldwork stage of the project was completed shortly before this chapter was written in 2016.

The project's key motivation was positive African storytelling, which addresses the longstanding strategy satirically described by Wainaina:

> Among your characters you must always include The Starving African, who wanders the refugee camp nearly naked, and waits for the benevolence of the West. Her children have flies on their eyelids and pot bellies, and her breasts are flat and empty. She must look utterly helpless. She can have no past, no history; such diversions ruin the dramatic moment. Moans are good. She must never say anything about herself in the dialogue except to speak of her (unspeakable) suffering.
>
> WAINAINA, 2005, p. 93

In this passage from *How to write about Africa,* Kenyan author and journalist Binyavanga Wainaina (2005, pp. 91–95) provides a tragically accurate but inappropriate writer's guide, incisively signposting the story clichés of Africa and the African that plague contemporary global representations. These Westernised images of Africa have been developed and solidified in the tales of western travelogues over many centuries. While their authors' motivations may have changed as Europe's interests in Africa changed across the centuries, the European storytellers' African characters remained riddled with the same crude characterisations.

The one-dimensional and frequently helpless African characters. of modern western literature; cinema; photography; radio; television; journalism; and foreign-aid marketing, have travelled to present-day eyes, ears and imaginations from the ancient written historical accounts of Classical antiquity (Bello-Kano, 2014, pp. 36–66).

The early Greco-Roman writers, such as Diodorus, framed "the African" as a "grotesque people among unusual beasts" who, in having adapted to nature, find themselves far removed from the "civilized and civilizing city" at the centre of the Greco-Roman worldview (Smith, 2009, p. 60). Wandering on through generations of travel writers we reach the medieval missionary discourse where Diodorus' grotesque people became a mass of black savage pagans in dire need

of spiritual salvation from their "cultureless selves" (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 44). In what can be called the religious scramble for Africa, medieval-era Christian church fathers began to frame black as "the colour of sin", rendering Africans divinely inferior, damningly trapped in their own pigment (Pieterse, 1995, p. 24). Subsequent to this, the Renaissance era brought a new travelogue agenda, framing Africa in terms of its perceived physical wealth, "which the natives had neglected to use for their own benefit" (Bello-Kano, 2014, p. 41). With both the souls and soils of Africa now a resource for Europe, the Enlightenment era's pseudo-scientists began to turn Europe's attention to Africans' bodies. Scientifically codifying the "African Other" with its inferior "black sperm" and subhuman brain, the invention of a "scientific-racism" discourse was written and rewritten (Buffon, 1831; Curran, 2011; Hegel, Nisbet & Forbes, 1975; Mikkelsen, 2013). The work of travelling scientists such as Buffon would heavily influence (and justify) future interactions with, and representations of, the African.

During the Victorian era, several ethical constructs arose from a new secular-liberalism, producing one major moral shift for Europe's interaction with Africa, the abolition of the slave trade. However, while Europe had set Africans free of slavery, it was time to colonise in a new way. This time, the discourse was one of "atonement and duty"; the chains might have been "struck from the African's neck" but "he must be converted", he must still be "civilised" (Robinson & Gallagher, 1961, p. 27). In 1884/85, the Berlin conference carved up Africa between European nations and, as the colonisers got to work, Joseph Conrad sailed up a dark African river. He published the *Heart of darkness* (1899) and a literate Western public, hungry for tales of faraway lands, read in wonder Conrad's "barbarous experience of an 'ugly' people and culture" (2013, p. 68).

There is significantly more to the story of the West's relationship with Africa. However, for the purpose of this short chapter, I will jump forward to the truly tragic episode that was the 1980s Ethiopian famine. This famine marks the birth of a reinvention of the motivations and language of the Western story of Africa and Africans. Through the media of photography, print media, and television, Africa was now more than ever a story of a distant people in "dire need" of the West. Giving birth to *poverty porn*, images and stories of starving Africans sparked calls to action for Western aid (Palmer, 1987; Richey & Ponte, 2008; Sankore, 2006). While much beneficial aid and charity work has been done across Africa since that time, the impact of media images designed to generate concern and care corresponded with the centuries old Western image of the African, rendering an in-need, one-dimensional character that simplistically represented nearly one billion people.

East African stories of love was inspired by a desire to challenge this one-dimensional character and story that has framed Africa as a singular place of helplessness and despair, in desperate need of charity. The project's first inspiration to take up this cause came from a Ugandan journalist and economist, Andrew Mwenda (2016). Much of Mwenda's work criticises the policies and practices of international-aid institutions and organisations for sustaining poverty and slowing economic growth in developing nations by taking economic responsibility off governments and facilitating corruption.

■ Reference Andrew (2013) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

Using debt cancellation as one example of aid, Mwenda (2003) argues there is a "naïve assumption" that the benefits of resetting a country's loan burden to zero will be passed on to the poorest portions of the country. Using an analysis of pre- and post-debt cancellation economic conditions in Uganda, he explains that, rather than the benefits reaching the poorest people, poverty can at times actually increase when the removal of the burden of a government's economic responsibilities leads to an increase in political patronage and a lack of focus on capital growth. The outcome of Mwenda's assessment is that the very people that the aid is meant to assist, the same people that the Western marketing of such campaigns uses in such stereotypical ways, receive little or no benefit and remain ever-present as the West's reductive characterisations of their individual, national and continental image.

Zambian international economist and author, Dr Dambisa Moyo (2009), joins Mwenda in arguing that Africans in general were in some ways better off in the 1980s before aid stifled growth by feeding corruption. Moyo, via a focus on economic growth and independence, looks to citizen-level strategies such as *micro lending*, where individuals have enough independence and autonomy to use innovative approaches to stimulate their own economic growth and development. The contextually informed arguments of Moyo and Mwenda are directly stifled by the global media's impression of Africans, which fuel the ongoing attitude of aid, avoidance and stereotypical attitudes rather than investment, interaction and a respect for Africans' own voices.

East African stories of love aims to contribute to both the dialogue and practice of reframing centuries-old Western images of Africa and the characterisations of her near one billion people by those from outside of the continent.

2 Project Design and Methodology: Finding Character

In the course of the *East African stories of love* project, I approached storytelling via a participatory model. The creative process phase of the project took place over six stages: recruitment, individual participation, paired participation, treatment writing, group focus, and the final outsider story edit.

FIGURE 17.1 Mary and Haj sharing their healthy youthful obsession with selfies. © 2016 Brendon Briggs. Used with permission.

■ Figure 18.1 has been changed as 17.1 for correctness, please check.

In the recruitment stage,[1] I avoided a rigid, formal methodology so as to reflect the organic nature of the overall project design. As a result, I attempted to discover participants through the social experience of travel on my initial visits to East Africa in 2013[2] In total, eight East Africans were recruited, four male and four female, ranging in ages from ten through to seventy, residing in different regions of mainland Tanzania and the islands of Zanzibar. They agreed to participate in a character – and story-finding process that, as will be described later in this chapter, would prove to be a uniquely positive and empowering experience for all involved.

In the individual participation phase, each participant was asked to imagine what they would be like if they were a character in a story or a film. The aim of this exercise was to establish a relaxed and creative way of exploring participants' sense of self. Through informal discussions, interviews, and time spent on their own, they were asked to explore what they thought love meant to them in all its different forms, with a particular focus on romantic love for the six adults and a focus on friendship for the two children. Through this exploration of self, we explored both the role that love has played in their lives and creative ways of articulating a self-reflexive character in preparation for the next phase of the project.

In the paired-participation phase, which ran for a month across Tanzania and Unguja, each participant was introduced to another participant, of a similar age and opposite sex, from a different region or East African country.

1 Murdoch University HREC permit #2015/121.

2 For the purpose of this chapter, I am focusing on the participatory storytelling phases of the project model. The doctoral dissertation explores the ethical framework of the recruitment methodology in greater detail.

Together, they were presented with the challenge of exploring whether their characters, but essentially themselves, would be able to fall in love. And if they did fall in love, what would their story of love be? Over a series of informal social workshops, interviews, discussions and time spent alone, the pairs explored their potential (and at times real) love for one and other.

In paying particular attention to the role of romantic love for the adult participants, narrative possibilities were created in the search for, and exploration and maintenance of, what Solomon (1988, p. 24) refers to as, the "shared-self", created through the process of being part of a romantic couple. The concept of two selves coming together to form a third shared-self sets up a creative process of finding a "third character" in the paired-participation phase. Love was chosen not only as the device for the positive and universally relatable subject, but also as a narrative device for the characters to anchor themselves in a challenge, which had both the personal and coupled/grouped goals of creating a shared-self. This phase of the process was filmed by myself, members of my local team and the participants themselves. This meant that the participants' stories and characters played out in real life were captured in video memory and ready to be transferred to paper prose in the third phase.

Once the eight characters and their four stories had been developed and explored, after my fourth three-month visit to East Africa, for the writing phase I returned to Australia in November 2015. Through both their recorded guidance and the observation of their words, behaviours and actions, I wrote a prose narrative (approximately 80,000 words).[3] This was of course done at a distance from Africa, my task being to create an integrated ensemble of these eight characters and their four *East African stories of love*.

With the treatment fully drafted, I returned to East Africa in February of 2016 and gathered the participants from across Zanzibar, Tanzania and Rwanda to the island of Unguja. Over the course of five days, I shared the ensemble narrative of their stories that I had developed. Together as a group, they discussed the presented narration and how they experienced their own and each other's characters and stories. As individuals, pairs and in the group as a whole, the participants discussed ways to overcome challenges within their stories. These included conflicts in their narratives such as beliefs around marriage, the issue

3 The choice of a feature-length screen treatment was chosen to allow an easily accessible, yet mood setting, narration to the participants. The expected creative output beyond the doctoral dissertation is a novel available in English. Profits from the novel will go towards the creation of a Swahili eBook translation and additionally a freely available audiobook to ensure the story is as accessible as possible to the people and places that it represents.

of distance between their physical and cultural worlds and other obstacles in the pathways of their romantic futures.

The process stimulated a great deal of conversation about participants' own beliefs and ideas from the perspective of their differing cultures, religions, ages, gendered roles, and life experiences. Facilitated in a creative-workshop environment, with the shared goal of a positive African story of love, this experience produced a great deal of reward for myself as researcher, my local team of translators and cultural advisors, and, most importantly, the participants. As a practice in ethical participatory storytelling, the project aimed for all participants to enjoyably direct the representation of themselves, their people and their cultures in the stories they developed. A second aim was for participants to have a positive experience in which they freely participated in the methodology and praxis of creative ethnographic research together with their fellow participants. In their feedback, participants indicated that they experienced a sense of reward in finding and developing one another's characters, stories, lives and cultures. This certainly gave me a sense of success in having used a project model that aimed to give its participants the most positive experience possible.

With the project's creative aim of discovering story and character for a multifaceted, normalising positive rendering of Africa, the required results for the project's success were whatever the participants wished to share. As a researcher, I was situated as an observer, offering an auto-ethnographic director's seat to the participants themselves as they researched their own self-reflexive stories. At the close of the five-day group workshop the participants unanimously handed full creative control to me as the researcher, without me asking for this. They gave me a mandate, as their "cultural outsider story-editor", to complete the "story-edit". This was because they felt confident that accurate, positive representations of themselves, their cultures and their many Africans had been found through the creative process and recorded in the written narrative.

In April of 2016, I returned to Australia with 200 hours of recorded footage from the entire participatory process. My next step was to reflect on this material for the purposes of my dissertation and receive guidance for the final redrafting and tweaking of the film treatment. For this phase, I became the final participant as a self-reflexive researcher and storyteller.

3 The Researcher's Role and Reflections

Over the now three-and-a-half years I have spent as both a researcher and storyteller, I have been a cultural outsider as both a practitioner and academic in

FIGURE 17.2 Friends or something more? © 2016 Brendon Briggs. Used with permission

my efforts to explore ways to normalise skewed Western images of Africa. For me as a storyteller, the project has been an experiment in positive storytelling where the final creative result (the treatment) is free to be whatever it will be, without being constrained by cinematic judgements about the quality of the final product. For me as a researcher, the greatest findings have been the positive qualitative results and observations of this creative model and the warm, enjoyable collaborative experience of both the participants and my local team.

While the 200 hours of footage could one day be made into a documentary, recording the entire process was mainly to allow myself, as the story-editor, to empathetically engage with the memory and experience of the participants. I believe this created a fuller, rounder and more wholesome set of characters and stories.

This supports Vaage's (2010) argument that, through an empathetic engagement with the "onscreen other's" beliefs, desires and feelings, a researcher or filmmaker can not only develop an understanding of a character but can also empathetically engage with their own feelings and those of the character(s). While I was inevitably present at the participants' workshops and discussions, I also purposely removed myself and my team from the space as often as possible to allow the storytelling participants to engage with the camera as the only observer.

Sometimes I set up cameras to cover the space in which they were sitting and at other times I gave the individuals and couples a small handheld camera so that they were able to record whatever, wherever and whenever they wanted to, throughout their time alone in their day-to-day life and when they were out on dates. The first purpose of this was to free them from the formality of the researcher's presence to allow a more natural and social context in which to explore each other's characters and stories. Secondly, it enabled me

to situate myself as a cinematic audience member/observer when acting as the story-editor. A major factor in the reasons for recording footage in this way was expanding my empathetic engagement beyond being a present ethnographic researcher. Through this approach, I also became a final viewer, watching the characters and stories unfolding before my eyes, on screen, from afar, once more positioned as the distant outsider.

In another example of the theoretical inspirations for the project's methodology, Tan (2013) offers a thorough investigation of the psychological intricacies of the relationship between cinema and audience. The complexities of the "spectator → character → narrative → spectator" relationships informed my engagements with the characters and stories as both a researcher and a story-editing practitioner. Tan's work; Vaage's (2010) theory of imaginative empathetic understanding; Solomon's (1988) notion of the shared-self and Singer's (2009) idea of the contemplation of people's romantic aspirations in their desire to merge their characters/individual-self in coupling were all key theoretical concepts that informed my work on this project.

Three dimensions of this project were significant for me; my dual roles of research and practitioner; the focus on the subject of love; and the use of recorded memory. The particular combination of these factors in this project offered a unique exploration of a group of storytellers' creation of their own love stories. An additional intention of the project was to engage with viewers' expectations (my own as observer/audience and future readers/viewers) of, and preparations for, not only the emotional experience of a love story, but one that becomes an act of addressing prejudice by sweeping away the reductive helpless-character and hopeless-narratives that have plagued the history of Western travelogue storytelling.

Having been handed creative control by the participants to complete their stories and their ensemble, I am continually discovering globally relatable character traits within the personalities of these eight, normal, everyday people. Such as Rais, the young Maasai man visiting a hundred hotels in the bustling city of Arusha in search of the city girl whose number he lost since finding her in the middle of nowhere while looking for a giraffe. Only time will tell if he gets the girl. Making this both an African and a universal story of love, loss and hope.

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CHAPTER 18

Cultural Appropriation and the Telling of Wisdom Stories

Keven Fletcher

Abstract

Recent social media outcries in North American cultural and educational circles have heightened the general public's awareness of cultural appropriation. This chapter explores the key ethical concerns raised by cultural appropriation in North America and outlines how they might inform decisions related to the adoption and adaptation of wisdom stories across cultural groups. To draw underlying issues into focus, particular attention is paid to the relationship(s) between First Nations and dominant social culture. The debate about cultural appropriation centres on the degree to which moral and ethical responsibilities (acknowledgement of historical loss, distribution of economic gain and regard for group autonomy) are intertwined with complex realities (delineations between groups, cultural essentialism and the flow of ideas between people). A series of suggestions about how telling wisdom stories from different cultures can be beneficial, providing that key considerations are upheld, follows. These include: respect for internal restrictions; caution in assuming expertise; avoidance of stereotypes; acknowledgement of sources; and, when working with material from highly marginalised groups, the importance of direct consultation. By adhering to these guidelines, the most pressing responsibilities associated with improper appropriation would be met, while avoiding the repercussions of approaches that rely on broader, blanket restrictions.

Key Words

Culture – appropriation – ethics – essentialism – universality – stories – autonomy and identity – storytelling – indigenous – First Nations

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1 Renewed Debate on Cultural Appropriation

When can one culture's wisdom story[1] be told by another? After decades of academic discussion on cultural appropriation, this issue has recently garnered unprecedented mainstream interest in North American cultural and academic life. This is largely due to a series of high profile objections to practices that at one time would not have generated much comment.

Previously, the focus of North American public debate mostly centred on matters of cultural insensitivity, particularly in the portrayal of minorities. Wearing blackfaces on stage, adopting minority figures as sports team mascots and donning cultural artefacts like feathered headdresses or costumes at unrelated festivals all fell under this banner.

More recently, the debate has expanded to include the criticism of practices that were once considered neutral or positive. The seemingly sincere adoption of another culture's spiritual practice, festivals or music has become a point of contention. A yoga class at the University of Ottawa was cancelled out of concern that it represented the improper appropriation of a practice from India (Foote, 2015). An open Holi event at the University of British Columbia resulted in a public backlash despite being organised by the Indian Students Association, with care taken around issues of authenticity (Bhasin & Sharma, 2016). Popular musical performers have been loudly criticised for adopting music genres generated by ethnic groups other than their own, despite the art form's long history of adoption and adaptation (Furedi, 2016).

■ Reference Furedi (2016) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

Dramatic exchanges between individuals have entrenched the views of those who differ on these issues, perhaps best exemplified by the viral video that captured an exchange between students at San Francisco State University over the hairstyle known as cornrows (Thomas, 2016). The explosion of social media comment that followed illustrated the depth of conviction on opposing sides, along with the bewilderment of many members of the public who wondered what substantive issues were actually at stake.

Through this chapter, I hope to affirm that the ethical concerns underlying cultural appropriation are significant and should inform whether one cultural group uses the expressions of another. Ultimately, attention will be turned to the implications of these issues for global storytelling; specifically, the adoption and adaptation of wisdom stories across cultures.

1 Wisdom stories are values-centred works that convey a particular way of life or understanding of purpose. Often, they outline what should be celebrated, what should be avoided and how to discern between the two.

2 The Ethical Issues Connected to Cultural Appropriation

In its simplest form, cultural appropriation involves "the taking of something produced by members of one culture by members of another" (Young, 2005, p. 136). Usually, concerns about cultural appropriation arise when one group is considered dominant and the other marginal. In current socio-political discourse, the use of the marginal culture's expressions by members of the dominant culture is considered problematic, while the use of the dominant culture's expressions by members of the marginal culture is thought to be a natural consequence of the social and political pressure to conform. In other words, cultural appropriation usually gains a negative connotation in situations where members of the dominant culture use expressions arising from a marginal culture without the full and equal consent of the latter.

Often, though not exclusively, these relationships are drawn across racial lines. To illustrate the deeper implications of cultural appropriation, the situation of First Nations in North America will be used as an example.

In general terms, First Nations find themselves marginalised with respect to the dominant culture in North America. Generations of interactions between the two social groupings (or, more accurately, between the dominant culture and the numerous, independent, culturally differentiated First Nations' communities) has led to a significant loss of life, land and culture for First Nations. The depth of this sense of loss has led leaders like Adrienne Keene to despair at what they perceive to be an underlying assumption that everything related to First Nations' society is regarded by dominant cultures to be in the "free bin" (Keene, 2016). Given the experience of entire First Nation communities being forced from their traditional lands; children being removed from their homes to be placed in residential schools; and artefacts of significant cultural value being taken away for fear of the heritage not being properly preserved, it is not difficult to understand how members of First Nations worry that yet more is free for the taking.

Although variation exists between communities, the overall statistics are staggering. The *Globe and Mail* noted that while Canada as a whole rated as the sixth most developed country in the world, the same criteria places our First Nations' population at 63rd. First Nations' children are three times more likely than most Canadian children to be raised in poverty; students on reserves are six times more likely to drop-out of high school; and the average lifespan of males is eight to nine years shorter than the general Canadian population (Rich country, poor nations, 2015).

As adapted from Adrienne Keene, concern about further damage through cultural appropriation exists primarily on two fronts: the just distribution of

economic opportunity and the ability to define and enhance group identity (Keene, 2016).

3 Economic Opportunity

The first of these fronts centres on the determination of what entails a just distribution of economic benefit from the use of the expressions of First Nations' cultures. For example, most proponents feel that, at minimum, only members of First Nations should be able to claim that a product is of First Nations' origin. There is also concern about corporations using First Nations'-inspired designs, on products ranging from coffee mugs to high fashion, without consultation. In this case, already marginalised individuals do not benefit from the much-needed economic proceeds which might otherwise accrue. Compounding the perceived insult is the improper application of designs, where deeply meaningful symbols related to particular families or mythologies are felt to have been trivialised.

It's important to note that very few, if any, members of First Nations suggest that expressions of their cultures should not be shared. Rather, they desire direct involvement and consultation, as when First Nations' fashion designers have successfully partnered with larger, external corporations. These relationships represent a form of cultural and economic exchange between groups, rather than appropriation.

This stands in stark contrast with other examples, where knock-off versions of First Nations' products are sold without any connection to the people who first fashioned the distinctive patterning (CTV News, 2015). By disregarding both the origins and ongoing context of a marginalised group's cultural expressions, these actions become particularly egregious demonstrations of cultural appropriation.

4 Group Identity

Whereas the just distribution of economic benefit comprises a fairly concrete concern regarding cultural appropriation, the question of identity formation strikes at a less tangible, yet deeper, apprehension.

When the dominant culture uses or appropriates representations of First Nations' life, it often reduces a tremendously diverse array of communities into a single, simplistic stereotype. To varying degrees, these images sink into the imagination of the dominant culture as reflecting a normative reality; but it is a reality that is invalid and ethically questionable. Further difficulties arise

from the tendency of these images to reflect the past rather than the current day, suggesting that First Nations' communities are not an ongoing, valued presence.

Even when it comes to scholarly or expert opinion on First Nations' history and culture, concerns arise when content and analysis are offered by those outside the community. Just as it might be considered an odd choice to invite a keynote speaker from Thailand to explain Brexit, it is equally odd to ask European-descended individuals to comment on First Nations' matters. According to this line of argument, choosing a non-First Nations' person to speak on First Nations' topics suggests that there may not be experts within the First Nations' community itself. In this variation of cultural appropriation, Keene suggests that the very act of inviting an outsider as an expert undermines those with expertise within the community.

Of even greater concern is the impact of these forms of appropriation on members of First Nations themselves. Already under significant pressure, First Nations' groups sometimes struggle to wrest control of their identity once their histories and cultural practices have been appropriated. Cultural appropriation results in the dominant culture acting as both the usurper of financial benefits and the prominent voice for depictions of First Nations' people in film, writings and images. Along with historical losses of life, land and culture, some First Nations face hurdles in defining and establishing a sense of identity in the present that connects to their past while setting a course for the future. In effect, appropriation impedes the autonomy, the ability to decide for themselves, of First Nations' communities.

5 Limitations of Identity Politics

Clearly, acts of cultural appropriation prompt significant ethical concern, particularly in situations of substantial power imbalances. At the same time, potentially competing factors must be taken into consideration.

Frank Furedi (2016) reminds us that identity politics is a construct, just as universalism was before it. Rather than asserting that any human has the potential to substantially understand the experience of another, proponents of identity politics claim that only members of a given group can sufficiently understand and relate their experience. Therefore, when it comes to voice in an academic paper or novel, only women are positioned to write about women, only those in the LGBTQ[2] community should write about their lives and only

2 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer (or Questioning).

members of a given ethnic group can adequately express its reality. When a member of the dominant society gives voice to the experience of a minority group or individual, that voice has been appropriated. Having gained renewed traction in the academic community since the 1980s, this line of thinking has recently burst onto the public realm fuelled by widespread exchanges on social media.

Although valuable, using identity politics to frame all human experience has some limitations. It may well be true that a First Nations' individual has unique knowledge on what it means to be First Nations and that a woman has unique knowledge on what her gender identity entails, but it does not follow that the understandings of outsiders are automatically harmful in a way that requires blanket suppression or censure. In addition, practical ramifications become onerous as to where lines should be drawn between ever more defined groups. For example, can an older, straight man write about a younger, lesbian woman as long as they are both First Nations?

This draws us into the arena of cultural essentialism, which brings rigid understandings of whether someone belongs or does not belong to a group. This division between insiders and outsiders comes with its own set of ethical quandaries, as set out by Erich Matthes (2016). After all, cultural groups are seldom static and homogeneous. Even core values and experiences can be shared, but with differing levels of emphasis and understanding. By ardently pursuing the question of who belongs and who does not, groups can estrange those at their margins, alienating both avid supporters and potential allies. The purer the vision of what constitutes membership the more likely it is that an internally generated stereotype will develop, ironically reminiscent of the dominant culture's impact, and harmful in itself.

Beyond this lies the recognition that a dominant social culture is no more static or homogenous than a marginal one. Therefore, as James Young argues, delineations can be artificial (Young, 2005). Two youths, ostensibly insider and outsider, might readily identify with each other's realities based on a combination of factors other than race (family structure; economic status; belief system; sport allegiance). Meanwhile, two certified insiders might view each other as being from different worlds for all the same reasons, despite what they share in terms of racial heritage. Delineations can also shift over time, especially when groups interact (even intermarry) or laws extend rights where previously they were non-existent (as in the case of same-sex marriage).

Another consideration in the cultural appropriation debate is the degree to which a construct leads to division between groups. Again, the more stringent the definition of boundaries, the more the world is conceptualised in terms of us and them. Although this might be helpful in fortifying group identity, it does not follow that this approach aids understanding and bonds between groups;

let alone promoting the cross-fertilisation of ideas that might ultimately enrich all parties.

In summary, when it comes to cultural appropriation, in general, it is important to simultaneously consider two realities:

1a the historical loss already suffered by marginalised groups at the hands of dominant groups;

1b the obligation to justly distribute current economic benefits that accrue from expressions uniquely reflective of marginal cultures; and,

1c the marginal group's right to autonomy as conveyed through the unimpeded ability to define and build their identity (within certain limitations, as with any group);

and,

2a the inherent limitations of identity politics, given the reality that cultures are neither static nor homogeneous;

2b the potentially negative consequences of cultural essentialism, especially in terms of narrowing internal diversity and deepening divisions between groups; and,

2c the restriction of potential benefits arising from unhampered cross-fertilisation between groups.

With the need to balance these thoughts in mind, our focus turns to the question posed at the outset of this chapter: When can one culture's wisdom story be told by another?

6 Cultural Appropriation and Storytelling

Let us begin by dispensing with the obvious. To some degree, cultural appropriation is ubiquitous and a daily reality for most of the world. Human history has been one long process of intermixing, impacting on all areas of life. Equally, storytelling is ubiquitous, and the general content of wisdom tales is often shared across cultural lines, whether through appropriation, exchange or coincidence.

If this is the case, what are the ethical implications of someone from outside a group adopting and adapting a particular tale?

As outlined above, one of the primary considerations lies in the historical and current balance of power between groups. A marginalised group might rightly be concerned that the adoption of a story from their culture manifests the continued existence of a "free bin", with the story being yet another cultural expression taken without permission.

Further, it may be true that, despite the lack of specific authorship, the story still represents a form of intellectual property generated by the group, even

if it is not recognised in law. If the appropriation of this property generates economic benefits, especially when those benefits impede the minority group from realising their own returns, there is cause for concern.

Finally, stories are powerful tools, linking people to the past while forging future identities. Wisdom stories, in particular, convey what should be celebrated, what should be avoided and how to discern between the two. They outline a way of life and an understanding of purpose with which a group identifies. In the case of a highly marginalised culture, actions that interfere with this role are clearly questionable, potentially hindering autonomy.

Simultaneously, it is one thing to declare a cultural boundary and quite another to defend a cultural delineation, given that cultures are neither static nor homogeneous. Within some First Nations' communities, family and sacred stories in particular are protected, requiring permission for wider distribution (Assembly of First Nations, n.d., p. 5). Other First Nations groups do not share this practice. Still others have changed their understandings over time, becoming more protective with the rise of identity politics-related concerns (âpihtawikosisân, 2012b). In this process, not only can opinions within a single group differ, but more than one group might legitimately share a similar story. Consequently, determining who speaks with authority on behalf of a given story can be difficult due to the diffuse nature of ownership by cultural groups, coupled with divergent expectations within and between groups.

Some might propose that this point cuts too fine, creating differentiations where none really exist. If one is not First Nations, one does not need to delve further into provenance to determine the precise source; it clearly belongs to others. At the same time, though, there is no common understanding within the wider span of First Nations' cultures about the sharing of stories, so there is no reason to conclude at an absolute level that a story of weak provenance should not be shared.

A peculiar but informative example of these difficulties arises with the famed story of *Two wolves*. Widely attributed to the Cherokees, it has spawned internal debate about its actual origins (âpihtawikosisân, 2012a). Some people in the Cherokee community claim that it could not be Cherokee because its dualistic approach does not reflect their spiritual practice, along with other factors. Of course, those in the same community who feel attached to the story and its message are upset by the implication that their beliefs are not seen as culturally authentic. This, of course, puts us into the territory of cultural essentialism and its divisive impact within communities.

Finally, positive outcomes can arise through the sharing of stories that enhance understanding and appreciation between peoples. Though the details of wisdom stories may be culturally specific, the basic plots and values at play usually are not. Hearing such stories can remind distinct groups about shared

aspirations, strengthening a sense of common purpose and enriching all involved. Storytelling can be a powerful vehicle for connecting diverse peoples.

7 Conclusions

Taking into consideration the issues raised by cultural appropriation, the telling of wisdom stories from various cultures can be beneficial, providing that the approach being used adheres to five ethical considerations:

1. that where commonly understood restrictions exist regarding the sharing of a story claimed by a single, identifiable cultural community, they be respected;
2. that in the sharing of a story from a culture other than one's own, it be made clear that one is neither speaking for that culture nor as an expert in that culture;
3. that where a story contributes to stereotypes that deny the complexity and diversity of a people, it not be shared by outsiders, except to underscore the negative impact of such stories;
4. that where a story is altered or found to be similar to stories from other cultures, original versions and origins be noted and celebrated as contributions to the global community; and,
5. that where a story arises from an identifiable, highly marginalised culture, direct consultation be undertaken to ensure that the use of the story neither represents an unjust distribution of economic benefit nor impedes the defining and building of group identity.

Of course, further refining needs to be undertaken, specifying more clearly what phrases such as *highly marginalised* and *direct consultation* entail. Nevertheless, this combination of guidelines should go some way towards forestalling the most serious impacts of appropriation while also avoiding the pitfalls associated with essentialism and the application of broader, blanket restrictions.

These five considerations provide a framework for arguing that it is, at times, appropriate and beneficial for wisdom stories to be adopted and adapted across cultural groups.

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CHAPTER 19

Eventually All of the Citrus Trees Died: Stories of Love and Loss from a Village in Cyprus

Stephanie Elisabeth Jacobs

Abstract

An interdisciplinary study of the first-hand narratives of elderly Greek and Turkish Cypriots reveals that a shared past, fractured relationships, grief and regret are still raw four decades after the villagers of Agia Eirini were separated by the 1974 war. My Greek-Cypriot grandfather's stories inspired this research and his old friends and neighbours have shared their memories, opened their hearts and accepted me as one of them. My status as an insider has given me unanticipated access not only to the Greek Cypriots formerly of Agia Eirini, but also to the other group, the Turkish Cypriots still living there who fondly remember my grandfather's family. This chapter gives the labouring classes a voice, enabling them to reveal a counter-narrative to the two opposing, official post-war narratives. It focuses on the stories of five individuals who grew up in the once harmonious mixed village of Agia Eirini. These stories tell of intercommunality; cooperation; friendship; love; shared celebrations; deep familiarity with the religious practices of the other group; and the deep sense of loss felt by both groups after 1974. These stories can help re-establish understanding and trust among the two communities, during a time of intense peace negotiations and possible reunification.

Key Words

Ethnography – intercommunality – storytelling – narratives – history – culture – anthropology – identity – religion – Cyprus

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1 Introduction

One of the smallest member countries of the European Union, Cyprus's strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean has historically made it a bridge

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between three continents; it has been invaded and colonised over many centuries. After being granted independence from Britain in 1960, increasing political and civil tensions culminated in the Turkish military intervention of 1974 (Bryant, 2010, pp. 11–12). Many Greek and Turkish Cypriots were displaced and the island remains divided (Hitchens, 1997).

Over recent decades, most research on Cyprus has focused on politics: the Ottoman and British Imperial periods; the EOKA movement for *enosis* (a right-wing Greek-Cypriot nationalist group, which fought for union with Greece); the 1974 Turkish military intervention; Cyprus's accession into the EU in 2004; and the rejected United Nations proposal to resolve the Cyprus dispute, the 2004 Annan Plan. Little research has explored the lives of ordinary Cypriots; the voices of the working classes have been ignored.

There are two distinct post-1974 official narratives commonly held and conveyed among Cypriots. The Greek Cypriot official narrative holds that the times before 1974 were peaceful and harmonious; nothing happened during the twenty previous years that could justify the intervention. The Turkish Cypriot official narrative holds that the times before 1974 were tumultuous and volatile; relations were always difficult, so the 1974 intervention was justified (Kizilyürek, 1993).

This study views Cypriot history through a subaltern looking glass, exploring the lives of five individuals and seeking to deconstruct official narratives. The perspective of rural and working-class people who grew up in the once harmonious mixed village of Agia Eirini, people whose destinies were determined by the political elites, reveals a history that differs from that told by the elites.

2 Recent Populations of Agia Eirini

During the Ottoman period (1571–1878), Greek Cypriots constituted the majority (71%) of the village of Agia Eirini. Their numbers declined during British rule (1878–1960); they constituted 50% of the village in 1921 and 35% in 1960. By 1973, Greek Cypriots comprised less than 20% of the population. After the Turkish military intervention of August 1974, they fled Agia Eirini and remain scattered throughout the island's south. The current inhabitants of the village are mostly the original Turkish Cypriot villagers and their descendants; their number was 595 in the 2006 census (TRNC State Planning Organisation, 2007).

Agia Eirini is unusual because almost no mainland Turks settled there. The community is perhaps less changed, less altered by mainland Turkish influences, than Turkish Cypriots in other northern villages.

Many of the elderly still speak Cypriot Greek, which they learned as children.

3 Hidden Histories

The interviews I conducted took place in participants' homes in 2015. Often their children or grandchildren joined us. Almost invariably members of the younger generations were surprised: "You went into the mosque?!"; "Mum! You never told me …". It was clear that many people had not shared with their children or grandchildren their experiences of growing up with inter-communality, friendship and cooperation. Their stories had been hidden; there was no oral history tradition about these aspects of the past.

4 Konstantinos

My grandfather Konstantinos is a Greek Cypriot man born in Agia Eirini in 1925. He migrated to Australia in 1947. As a child, I heard stories of his beloved Turkish Cypriot friends.

Aged ten, he asked his parents if he could attend the village's Turkish instead of Greek school; he had suddenly realised that his Turkish Cypriot friends spoke fluent Greek, but he barely knew their language and he felt embarrassed. His parents agreed and he went to the Turkish school for several months.

His best friend was Mehmet Emin:

> Next to me there was a Turkish family. They had a young boy like me. We used to live together and grew up together until I was twenty-one years old, when I left Cyprus … We went everywhere together. There were no troubles – we were best friends … We were more than friends: we were brothers, so close … All of the young Turkish people were my good friends. There was no difference between Greeks or Turks. We would go to their weddings; they went to our weddings, christenings, even church all together … It was beautiful there. It was so nice until I left Cyprus.

Konstantinos reminisced about the old days when the two communities shared in each other's celebrations:

> Every Christmas and Easter we would give them some things like *flaounes* [Cypriot Easter bread] and other gifts, and vice versa [at the end of Ramadan], to keep up the friendships. They were the customs we used to have. Our parents were friends too. There is no difference [between] Greeks and Turks, apart from the language and religion. I feel sorry for them, too, because they have been displaced from their houses as well. It was something terrible that never should have happened.

In July 2013, 41 years after their last meeting, Konstantinos and Mehmet Emin met in Agia Eirini (see Figure 19.1). Both in their eighties, they sat, talked, laughed and cried. One of my grandfather's family members described the expression on his face as "a state of grace".

A few months later, Mehmet Emin passed away. In 2014, my parents and I visited his widow, Feriha, in Agia Eirini. She was warm and welcoming. We gave her a framed photo of Konstantinos and Mehmet Emin from our 2013 visit and she started to cry; she was deeply touched. She told us that on the day that Konstantinos left Agia Eirini for Australia in 1947, Mehmet Emin put on his best suit and went to get a haircut; he wanted to look his best to say farewell his dearest friend.

5 Feriha

Feriha is a Turkish Cypriot woman living in Agia Eirini, the widow of my grandfather's best friend. When I interviewed her in 2015, she remembered my parents and myself from our previous visits. She showed us the photo of

■ Figure 20.1 has been changed as 19.1 for correctness, please check.

FIGURE 19.1 Konstantinos and Mehmet Emin reunited.

Mehmet Emin and Konstantinos that we had given her. She spoke about the two men: "They loved each other so, so, so, so much!" She said that, after Konstantinos left for Australia, Mehmet Emin at that time was not yet married and was very close to following his best friend to Australia.

Born in 1934, Feriha never went to school. As the eldest daughter, she helped raise her younger siblings so that her mother could go to work in the fields. Her family was terribly poor.

As a child, Feriha spoke Greek just as well as Turkish. She worked on the farm with her friends:

> We used to go to the fields for work, Greek and Turkish girls. While we were working we were singing Greek and Turkish songs all together. All together we were working and singing.

They were so close, in fact, that Feriha grieved terribly when her Greek Cypriot friends left the village in 1974. For the first few years, the Turkish Cypriots tried to look after the farms that belonged to their Greek Cypriot friends, expecting them to soon return, but:

> We couldn't look after fields, we couldn't keep on watering the plants and eventually all of the citrus trees died. After the Greeks left, it was too difficult for us to continue looking after the farms on our own.

Tending the trees of the "enemy" was not her responsibility but she still carried that guilt with her, more than forty years later.

After the border opened in 2003, many of her Greek Cypriot friends came to visit her. My great-uncle Iordanis met Feriha and Mehmet Emin at the border once and drove them to his house, where he put on a big feast for them. "We were so happy! We cried and cried", she said.

After the interview, Feriha smothered me with hugs and kisses (see Figure 19.2); it was the affection one only feels from family.

6 Hürsiye

Hürsiye is a Turkish Cypriot woman living in Agia Eirini. The younger sister of Mehmet Emin, born in 1936, she lived next door to Konstantinos. She spoke of my grandfather's visit in 1972. She greeted him but he did not recognise her (when he left, he was 21 and she was just 11; she had changed more than him). He asked her name. She said, "How can you not recognise your sister?!"

FIGURE 19.2 Feriha and the author

FIGURE 19.3 Feriha and the author

> We were very close together and I remember my mother cooking food for all of us. We used to spend time together and play together. We were good friends and we shared everything. We cooked together, too. I used to make [*flaounes*] by copying the others but I didn't really know what I was making. We used to copy each other's cooking … We used to swap foods. I would get *flaounes* and I used to give them *tzourekia* and *koulouria* [she used the Greek names of these sweets]. We would learn how to cook from each other.

Hürsiye told me that my great-grandfather was the *koumbaro* (best man), planning and paying for her wedding in 1956. My parents were thrilled: "So we are family!" Many Turkish and Greek Cypriots were *koumbaroi*, bridesmaids and groomsmen for each other; evidence of the deep friendships that existed between the groups.

It was normal for the whole village to be invited to the weddings of both Turkish and Greek Cypriots, which often went on for three days. Many Turkish Cypriot weddings included the practice of henna tattoos.

Hürsiye had two children, both of whom live in the village. Tragically, her husband was killed during the 1963 conflict in Cyprus.

7 Kostas and Irini

Greek Cypriots Irini and Kostas, both born in Agia Eirini in 1938, married in 1957. My great-uncle Iordanis, Kostas's childhood friend, was the couple's *koumbaro* and godfather to their first child. As children, Irini and Kostas spoke Greek, English and a little Turkish; they knew enough to converse with their fellow villagers. Both worked in the fields in Agia Eirini alongside Turkish Cypriots; "We got along very well".

Both recalled Turkish Cypriots visiting the church in the village. Kostas, who had entered the mosque growing up, explained that only Greek Cypriot men, not women, were allowed in the mosque back in those days. Both joined EOKA in the 1950s. Kostas was a teenager, a naïve boy who was "just following orders". I could see the anguish in his eyes when he said, "I feel guilty to this day for the terrible things that EOKA made me do".

He redeemed himself: In 1974, with escalating tensions, some Turkish Cypriot girls were captured by Greek Cypriot soldiers and imprisoned in a café in the village. After three days without food or water; Kostas could not leave them suffering:

> What a terrible thing to do! How could you lock them up?! … I kept an eye on them and then I got them out and took them home. They had a wash, they got some milk and they went back. I told them not to leave: "Otherwise our people – they will kill me". … I was asked by some other villagers what was I doing? … My people threatened to kill me because they said, "Why did you do such a thing?" … They took them to another house … One of our people went there with a bomb. He said he was going to kill them in the house … I heard the bomb go off. I ran. I was wondering what happened and whether the girls were killed … There was crying and screams. I opened up the door. They all came out alive … I cried with joy … They said to me, "What have we done? They are going to kill us!" Then the soldiers took them away … I ran up to the soldiers and asked them to let them go home. They did and I took them home.

After the Turkish intervention a few months later, Kostas and Irini fled and eventually settled in Episkopi, a village located in the Limassol district of the south of the island. When the island was divided in 1974, the Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Episkopi fled to the Akrotiri British Base Area, whilst some displaced Greek Cypriots from the north settled in Episkopi (Peace Research

Institute Oslo (PRIO) Cyprus Centre, 2011). Since the border opened in 2003, they have travelled north many times to see their friends in Agia Eirini. "There is still lots of love", Kostas said. They have also met some of those young Turkish girls that Kostas rescued, now women in their fifties. Their rescuer is deeply respected by them and their families.

8 Ibrahim

Ibrahim is a Turkish Cypriot man, born in 1948 and still living in Agia Eirini. He finished primary school and high school and even went to London to go to university. After one and a half years, the tuition fees quadrupled and he could no longer afford to study.

In London, he worked in a tailor's shop with people from all over the world, Indians; Pakistanis; Japanese; and Turkish and Greek Cypriots. He spoke English with everyone, but Turkish and Greek with the Cypriots; "Many of the Greek Cypriots also knew how to speak Turkish and would speak to me in Turkish rather than Greek". Ibrahim's proficiency in Greek improved during his seven years in London as he had so many Greek Cypriot friends and colleagues there.

Ibrahim remembered attending Greek weddings and funerals as a child. Later, he entered the church when he attended a *panayiri* (church festival) with his Greek Cypriot girlfriend. Several other Turkish Cypriots were also enjoying the *panayiri*.

He described a significant moment:

> I lined up with the Greeks to kiss the hand of the priest and, after kissing his hand, I drew his hand to my forehead, as we do when we greet a *Hoca* [Imam]. The priest asked me if I was an Ottoman; I said yes. He understood and sent me on my way.

Smiling, Ibrahim said, "I will remember that story until the day I die".

Since 2003, Ibrahim has visited the south of the island several times to see his Greek Cypriot friends from Agia Eirini.

An encounter a week after our interview was very moving. My great-uncle Andreas was born in 1934 and had meningitis, a complication of measles, as a child. He has been deaf most of his life. Having completed primary school, he can read and write. He lip-reads and has slurred speech. Four decades after he fled, I took him to Agia Eirini.

A small village is full of eyes. Shortly after we entered the village coffee shop, Andreas had a visitor: Ibrahim. It took Andreas a few moments to remember Ibrahim; he was much younger (and had more hair) when they were neighbours. Suddenly it clicked who his visitor was, and he was thrilled to see his old friend.

With his arm around Andreas, Ibrahim took him to meet a group of men sitting outside. Several remembered him and greeted him warmly. Ibrahim kept his arm around Andreas, claiming him?, protecting him?, demonstrating that he was someone to welcome?, I wasn't sure, but his warmth towards Andreas was moving to witness.

Another man strode quickly towards Andreas with a broad smile and outstretched hand. When Andreas did not recognise him, Fuat took off his hat and Andreas smiled from ear to ear, grasping his hand warmly. It was a lovely reunion, filled with many laughs, of men who had worked closely together (see Figure 19.4).

Andreas had been loved and respected in his village where people had grown up with him, accepted him and easily understood his strange speech. A farmer since he was twelve, he lost his identity and his community when he fled his land in 1974.

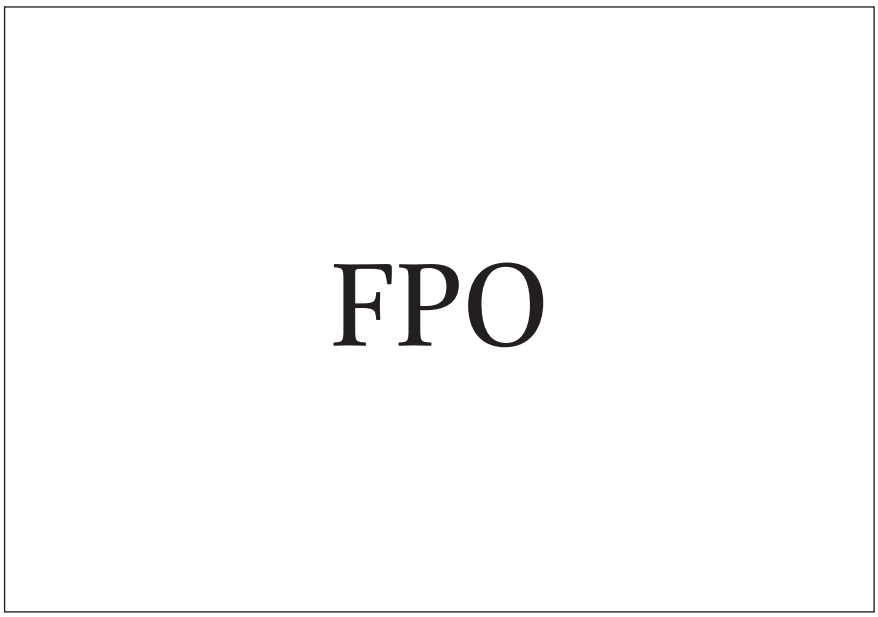

FIGURE 19.4 Andreas, delighted to meet his old friend Fuat

9 Conclusion

For centuries, many Greek and Turkish Cypriots co-existed in a great number of mixed villages. People shared in each other's religious and cultural traditions, spoke each other's languages and lived in communities where the groups lived not just side-by-side but together, as a single community.

Several colleagues had warned me that I would face suspicion and hostility in Turkish Cypriot villages; I encountered the opposite. My status as an insider resulted in access to many Greek and Turkish Cypriots from my grandfather's village. Many elderly people from both groups remembered my grandfather, his parents and brothers, and welcomed me into their homes as if I was family.

Interview digressions, stories, yielded rich data. Kostas cried with joy when he found the imprisoned girls alive; Feriha still feels guilt about the dead citrus trees of her neighbours; Hürsiye, meeting my grandfather after 25 years, said, "How can you not recognise your sister?!" These people did not just coexist with the other group. Their stories of deep love and loss, hidden for decades, paint a picture of a time when Greek and Turkish Cypriots lived as one community.

The first-hand experiences of villagers expose both Greek and Turkish Cypriot official narratives as flawed. Giving such people voices, collecting comprehensive accounts of Cyprus's recent history, is critical to truly understanding the island's history. Working class people's memories could awaken new generations of Greek and Turkish Cypriots to their shared past.

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CHAPTER 20

Interactive/Transmedia Storytelling as Cultural Narrative: Stories of Family, Place and Identity

Melissa Lee Price and Michael R. Ogden

Abstract

If cinema and television are considered the dominant storytelling vehicles of the twentieth century, helping to shape and reflect the social, political and cultural sensibilities of that era, then the emerging characteristics of twenty-first century storytelling are digital; interactive; networked; playful; mobile; social; processual; immersive; and convergent. This chapter explores migrant narratives and identity formation through the vehicle of immersive; participatory; user-driven; multi-platform; and interactive documentary. What emerges is a new, evolving literacy in response to emerging storytelling technologies. Through describing two transmedia projects in which they are personally involved, the authors also provide a glimpse of an emerging ecology of storytelling through which a new vocabulary is evolving. This vocabulary assigns a different role to participants who are both immersed in the narrative discourse and actively engaged in the storytelling itself.

Key Words

Documentary – interactive – transmedia – storyworlds – transnational – cultural – identity – mobile

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> I'm on an archaeological journey, searching for traces of my past, threads of understanding, and shards of memory that might help me construct a more panoramic picture of my life…These stories will hopefully reveal much more than the "facts" of my family….
>
> STONE, 2004

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1 Introduction

Why tell stories? Storytelling is what we do to make sense of the world. Stories link us to ancestors we will never know and contribute to the personal histories we build in establishing our own identity. Evolving from oral tradition, storytelling has kept pace with technological developments in human expression, from cave paintings to computer mediated, multi-screen adaptations. The telling and retelling of stories around the world is evidence of their power and ability to transcend time, language and culture.

Robert Fulford (1999) posits that storytelling formed the core of civilised life and was as important to preliterate peoples as it is to us living in the information age. With the advent of mass media, the role of the storyteller in popular culture has shifted from the individual to the "cultural industry". This industry forms an apparatus for the production of meanings and pleasures involving aesthetic strategies and psychological processes, bound by its own set of economic and political determinants and made possible by contemporary technical capabilities (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1969; Adorno, 1975; Andrae, 1979; Hirsch, 2000; Fulford, 1999; Neale, 1985).

2 Transmedia Storyworlds

The cultural industry has been shaken by the forces of technological democratisation in both the means and mode of production. During the 21st century humanity has witnessed changes in digital-media technologies that have transformed the production and reception of screen narratives. It began with the diffusion of affordable technology (cameras, computers, authoring/design software), along with audience frustrations with traditional media, and pressure for a more engaging storytelling environment. This was made possible by the multitude of producer-users, *produsers*, active on social media sites such as *YouTube*, *Vimeo* and *Facebook*, who were willing to engage with new topics and push the boundaries of storytelling and distribution.

The convergence of media and information technologies has led to the emergence of the produser, and the liberation of the means and mode of production of mediated storytelling. Produsers have thus been able to distribute and engage with multiple media incarnations of narrative storyworlds across multiple media platforms (Ryan & Thon, 2014). Storyworlds represent the evolution of the storytelling narrative from a linear, self-contained representation of traditional language-based narrativity and "… acknowledges the emergences of the concept of 'world' not only in narratology but also on the broader cultural scene" (Ryan and Thon, 2014, p. 1). With *Web 2.0* and the growth in

■ In this paragraph the author name Ryard has been changed as Ryan as per reference list, please check for correctness.

social media engagement, the role and importance of multi-platform media has led to a sense that "understanding media" is key to understanding culture and society (McLuhan, 1964).

Media convergence is "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2006, p.1). Henry Jenkins coined the term *transmedia* in reference to the trajectory media convergence was taking (Jenkins, 2003). A decade later, Jenkins, Ford and Green (2013) refined and expanded on media convergence and transmedia with the introduction of the idea of *spreadable media* as a,

> shift from distribution to circulation [signalling] … a movement toward a more participatory model of culture one which sees the public not as simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined.
>
> JENKINS, FORD and GREEN, 2013, p.2

Simply stated, transmedia means "across media"; while the notion of spreadable media introduces the active engagement of "participatory culture" (Jenkins, 1992). Each medium makes its own contribution to the unfolding of the story and the produsers, deploying *Web 2.0* media production and distribution capabilities, serve their individual and/or collective interests (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). When referring to the multi-platform nature of constructing transmedia storyworlds, media convergence has an air of technological inevitability, as a result of which the media are entering a new phase of influence over culture, society and perceptions of our place in both. But, what is (trans) media converging around? We prefer to place narrative and story at the centre of (trans)media convergence and position the produser as an active partner in building interactive storyworlds (Pearson & Smith, 2015; Ryan & Thon, 2013; Lambert, 2013; Page & Thomas, 2011).

■ Reference Ryan & Thon (2013) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

3 Interactive/Transmedia Documentary

The impact of the internet on journalistic storytelling has been well documented, and evolving forms of transmedia journalism are still being tested against ethics and best practices; the focus here is on the emergence of what has been variously called interactive documentaries; web or connected documentaries; collaborative or community documentaries; or transmedia documentaries

(King, 2010; Allen, 2006; Moloney, 2012; Zion & Craig, 2014). Interactive documentaries exist simultaneously as a product and a process, they are relational objects that invite and demand the audience to interact/participate in various ways (Gaudenzi, 2009; Nash, 2014). This is a distinguishing feature that identifies the *i-doc* from a documentary done with digital technologies or shovelled on to the web with a veneer of semi-active audience *click-through*. Although there is no formal consensus on how to classify i-docs, the development of variations calls for a new taxonomy for better understanding of how each variant uses technology to create a different bond between the actuality, authorship, the (prod)user, and the storyworld (Aston & Gaudenzi, 2012).

4 I-Docs as Interactive Stories of Identity

As DNA testing has moved from the realm of science fiction and crime detection, it has become increasingly popular to have ancestry *autosomal* DNA tests done to discover one's ethnic roots. The results usually show that, no matter how much we identify as a certain ethnic or cultural group, we carry the genes of ancestors who do not always fit our preconceptions.

Traditional emigration usually meant saying goodbye forever to home and family. In the 21st century, migrants use technology to keep in touch and thus lessen the extent to which they are starting over. With the rise of ancestral DNA testing (familytree.com; 23andme.com) and popular genealogy television shows (*Who do you think you are?*; *Finding your roots*) and websites such as Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org, technology is even allowing us to find and contact distant relatives to fill in missing bits of our own story. As more newspapers and other rich data sources digitise their collections, the layperson can go online and read documents that were previously only available to scholars.

I-docs are an emerging medium to tell the story of these identity explorations and their ramifications for individuals, families and communities. Two examples of i-docs that have undertaken this genre of storytelling will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

5 Stories of Place and Identity: the *Teulu, Familyar, Family* i-Doc

> I was raised in a community that held to the bedrock of family values and an unshakable faith in God, where friendships lasted forever and no one was a stranger.
>
> EDMONDS, 2013

In the South of the United States of America, one of the first questions anyone is asked about another Southerner is "Who are they?" The question is really asking, "Who are their people?" And the answer is usually followed by someone trying to determine how they might be related. Often, upon introduction, someone is asked, "Are you related to [insert name] of [insert town/state]?" This conversation reflects the deep feelings of family and place most Southerners still carry.

Teulu and *familyar* are the Welsh and Scots words for and the i-doc of that name follows three families, who migrated from Britain to Virginia to South Carolina and westward. Initial European settlement in North America was along the eastern seaboard in Virginia and, by 1735, Boston, Massachusetts to Charleston, South Carolina were connected by the King Highway. As settlers moved south and west, new roads, such as The Fall Line Road and the Great Wagon Road, were built. By the time of the American Revolution, descendants of the early settlers, as well as new arrivals, were headed west seeking new lands and opportunities. Many of them arrived in Edgefield County, South Carolina, on the border between South Carolina and Georgia, as the Great Wagon road went south to Augusta, Georgia, on the Savannah River, before turning west through Alabama and Mississippi.

The idea for the *Teulu, Familyar, family: Along the Fall Line road* i-doc, was born when one of the co-authors of this chapter, Melissa Lee Price, moved from England, where she had lived for nearly 20 years, to Dubai. She was struck by how similar much of the Emirati culture was to her native Southern one. Family, religion and region are at the heart of both the Emirati and Southerner's core sense of being. Emirati/Arab names reflect their descent; child of Y son of Y son of Y; Southerners frequently name children the mother's maiden name and those names reappear in subsequent generations. A holder of two passports, she felt American and British, but superseding both was "I am a Southerner". Starting with a free Ancestry.com subscription she set out to find out who she was.

During the search she has discovered cousins she never knew and stories families never tell. She convinced her brother to have a *y-DNA* test to see which 18th century *Price*s in Edgefield County, South Carolina, she should document. DNA, and later documentary evidence, showed that all of the Prices on the 1790 Edgefield census were related and that the Price family was descended from one of the first settlers in the US. John Price arrived in Jamestown, Virginia from Wales in 1611 as part of the third, and ultimately successful, attempt to settle the colony (Dorman, 2005). His great grandson, Daniel, migrated to Chester, South Carolina, in 1765 and then moved to Edgefield, where he died in 1801 (South Carolina State Archives, 1765). The American South's complex relationship with slavery is also documented in the records. In 1769 Daniel Price was

■ Reference Dorman (2005) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

arrested, tried, and convicted (later pardoned) for killing a slave (South Carolina State Archives, 1769). In 1772 he was convicted in civil court for destroying a neighbour's property in a boundary dispute (South Carolina State Archives, 1772). Daniel's grandson, Joseph B. Price, donated the land and built one of the first Methodist Churches in the South Carolina backcountry. While his cousins and brothers were slave holders, he followed the traditional Methodist teaching that slavery was immoral (United States Census, 1840).

The i-doc format was chosen for this project because the stories and research were added to and expanded upon by connecting and interacting with both known and unknown cousins and even strangers. The project also used social media websites such as *Find a grave*, which allow one to register a request to have a photograph of a family member's grave taken by someone living in the area. Indeed, one contributor took it upon herself to document all graves in the McCormick City Cemetery, for this website, over a two-year period.

Social participation allows a story to shift from being about a family into one of community. With community comes a sense of self and connectedness even though the miles, and even the diversity of genes, may be great.

6 Transnational Stories of Identity: the *Where Are You From?* I-Doc

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE) the most common question asked by and of just about everyone upon first meeting is, "Where are you from?" In a nation where the majority (87 percent) of the population is expatriate, one's identity is assumed to be one's place of origin.

In the 21st century, increasing numbers of people around the world belong to two or more societies at the same time. This is clearly exemplified by the both transient and semi-permanent nature of expatriate migration in the UAE (Jackson, 2008). This is what many scholars refer to as *transnational migration* (Stroh, 2013; Bauböck & Faist, 2010; Kim, 2009; Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc, 1995; Schiller, 2003). Nina Glick Schiller defines transmigrants as "those persons who, having migrated from one nation-state to another, live their lives across borders, participating simultaneously in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state" (Schiller, 2003). Transnational migrants work, pray and express their political interests in several contexts rather than in a single nation-state. Some will put down roots in a host country, maintain strong homeland ties, and belong to religious and political movements that span the globe. At some stages in their lives transnational migrants are more focused on their home countries of origin, while at other times they are more involved in their home countries of reception. Likewise, they endeavour

to climb two different social ladders, striving for upward mobility, remaining steady or experiencing downward mobility, in various combinations, with respect to both home sites. How, then, does this transnational experience influence their autobiographical narrative … their sense of self /identity and the nature of what constitutes home and belonging?

The idea for the *Where are you from?* i-doc came to one of the co-authors of this chapter, Michael R. Ogden, while riding a taxi to his new place of employment in Dubai. The position Ogden has adopted for this project is undoubtedly a function of his own ethnic background and international experience; that of being a mixed-ancestry Native American Indian; an academic; a documentary filmmaker; a storyteller; married to an indigenous Fijian; and living and working between cultures. So, when asked by the taxi driver "Where are you from?" a whole flood of thoughts became initiated by this seemingly simple question. "Where are you from?" is also asking, "Who are you?" and that can be a complicated story of cultural heritage; nationality; migration history and identity. The frequency with which this question comes up (combined with "How long have you been in Dubai?") prompted Ogden to turn the questions around, to reflect the questions back to the asker. The personal stories that emerged wove a tapestry of economic transmigration, identity born in linguistic and cultural homes of origin, but equally rooted in their adopted home of residence. Many people had moved their families to live with them in Dubai and had children growing up and attending school with an international group of classmates. All spoke of joys and heartaches experienced in both of their homes.

A further chance encounter, at a Dubai mall with a couple from Fiji, offered Ogden not only a chance to converse in Fijian, but also to learn of the expatriate Fijian community resident in the UAE. Robin Nair, Fiji's Ambassador to the UAE, has stated that many Fijians work in the UAE with Dubai; Abu Dhabi; Al Ain and Delma representing the main concentration centres of Fijians in the UAE (Bolatiki, 2014). Most Fijian transmigrants are professionals, "there are 24 Fijian pilots and … some 50 nurses working in the UAE and there are seafarers working on UAE boats as well as in other professions" (Mustafa, 2012).

Being away from home is not always easy for a Fijian. Nicky Vananalagi-Wivou, a library technician at Ras al Khaimah Institute of Applied Technology, relates a longing for home in a way similar to other Fijians in the UAE, "I was born and raised in a little town in Fiji … I still think of it as home", she stated, even though she had lived in Australia prior to moving to the UAE. "Home to me is my culture, identity and family connections … I have passed it on to my daughter … but for her Australia is more of a home" (Croft, 2009, n. p.).

As a documentary-maker, Ogden saw an opportunity to tell a story, their story,… his story. But this was not a story that could be told easily in a linear

fashion. Nor was this a homogenised story of migration, identity and belonging. These were highly personal stories that would comprise a mosaic of what it means to be a transmigrant Fijian, living between nation-states and cultures. Ogden began developing his approach and settled upon an interactive transmedia storyworld comprised of both the qualities of a hypertext mode of interaction and the encouragement of produser engagement to building the actuality narrative in alignment with a more participatory mode of interaction. It is intended to be a transmedia documentary, which will launch on multiple platforms on the web and through social media in 2018 and be an ongoing project.

7 Future of Storytelling

There is no conclusion; interactive/transmedia documentary has a short history but a potentially long future. This writing is merely a glimpse at the next chapter in the never-ending story of human narrativity, an evolution in actuality narratology, the reclaiming of literary voice from the cultural industry through restorification and the emergence of the produser as the next-generation storyteller.

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PART 5

Biographical Perspectives

∴

Introduction to Part 5

Tracy Ann Hayes

Narrative stories provide us with a way of understanding experience and, as identified by Etherington (2004, p. 9), when "we use our own stories, or those of others, for research, we give testimony to what we have witnessed, and that testimony creates a voice". Retrospection and introspection are integral to the process, as is a keen awareness of the power of the author as the person capturing and sharing this testimony. Biographical perspectives involve telling our own stories (autobiography) and those of others (biography). Yet, it is not possible to tell our own story in an unrelated way since we do not live in isolation. Many authors prefer the term auto/biography to reflect the interconnectedness and interdependence of biography with autobiography (Stanley, 1993). Biographical perspectives offer opportunities for us to explore (and to challenge) normativity, hegemony, power and oppression, to develop a greater understanding of how these impact on lives and to make sense of our experiences. The five chapters in this section cross the globe, traversing America, Nigeria, Israel, Lithuania and the UK to explore dimensions of identity and life history in myriad ways.

This voyage of discovery starts in the United States of America, with the *StoryBoard Collaborative*, which comprises four international organisations that have joined together to promote life-story work through distinct yet complementary means. Their chapter highlights the transformational power of writing, telling and sharing the emotional autobiographical stories of life. The second chapter moves on to Nigeria as Bridget Yakubu explores the role of women as storytellers who create stories from everyday experiences. She highlights that the process of constructing and sharing stories is a powerful way for Nigerian women to challenge patriarchal expectations that they should be seen and not heard.

The next destination is Israel, where Nancy Peled continues this idiographic approach in her personal and emotional story of mothering on a kibbutz, again questioning patriarchal expectations by reflecting on how stories, those that are told to us and those we tell ourselves, come to define our lives and the lives of those for whom we care. Nancy's story reminds us of the emotional impact of reflecting, on reawakening memories and of the need to address any feelings of sadness, guilt or regret that may emerge from this process.

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The awareness that memories of the past impact on present day construction of reality accompany us as we move on to Irena Ragaišienė's chapter. She uses a case study of Lithuanian Women Émigrés to highlight that a story can be told only in relation to stories of others, as she provides a critical analysis of the narrativisation of identity. The section ends in the UK, with my contribution demonstrating how adopting an evocative methodological approach to researching educational experiences may be an effective way for authors to invite a reader to imagine themselves within the story, sharing the experience. I argue that sharing narratives can be a democratic process, enabling a conversation between narrator/author and listener/reader that has the added benefit of sparking further conversations. This is an active and dynamic process, the importance and effectiveness of which should not be overlooked in the rush to move onwards.

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CHAPTER 21

Sharing, Saving and Studying Life Stories: Diverse Perspectives

Cheryl Svensson, Paulette Stevens, Sarah White, Mary O'Brien Tyrrell and Valerie Perry

Abstract

Leaders from four international organizations in the United States have joined together to promote life story work through distinct yet complementary means. They represent the *StoryBoard Collaborative* and include the *Birren Center for Autobiographical Studies*, an organization focused on guided autobiography (GAB). It is based on life theme writing and sharing in a supportive small group. The *International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review* defines and develops the field through collaboration in practice, research, and education with professional, volunteer and individual applications across the lifespan. It furthers research by establishing a working definition of terms and integrating research in practice and education. *Personal Historians*, represented until 2107 by the A*ssociation of Personal Historians*, provide professional services to preserve the stories of individuals, families and other groups in a variety of media and formats. The *Life Story Library Foundation* collects, saves and shares life stories as valuable recorded history. Its *story wheel system* energizes community-based story circles to deepen awareness, bridge differences and revive the culture of listening and storytelling worldwide. The history, mission and goals of these four life story organizations will be discussed and an invitation extended to collaborate with others to lead the life story movement worldwide.

Key Words

Life story – personal historian – autobiography – reminiscence – life review – collaboration

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We live in an impersonal age, where texts have replaced conversations and social media has replaced community. We are in danger of leaving no trace of our lives beyond the zillion data points in our Facebook feeds and the jpgs on our phones. We will have no tangible record of our experiences, observations and insights to pass on to the future – unless we take action to leave a legacy. The power of story addresses both the hunger for meaningful interaction and the imperative to leave a record.

As members of the *StoryBoard Collaborative*, Cheryl Svensson, Mary O'Brien Tyrrell, Sarah White and Paulette Stevens are catalysts serving a growing movement to feed the hunger for meaning through story. We believe our mission is resonant with the energy of the participants in the global reflections on narrative conference, from which the chapters in this book originated. Backed by our respective organizations and fuelled by our shared interest in story, we came together and named ourselves the S*toryBoard Collaborative*. Our mission is to promulgate education, training, research and collaboration to advance the use of non-fiction reminiscence-based stories to enrich and care for the lives of all people. This chapter summarizes the history, offerings and opportunities offered by each organization. Table 21.1, below, presents key details of the four groups.

1 Birren Center for Autobiographical Studies: Cheryl Svensson & Valerie Perry

The Birren center for autobiographical studies (n.d.) is founded on the work and legacy of James E. Birren, a pioneering gerontologist and founding dean of the school of gerontology at USC. He stumbled upon the power of life stories more than 40 years ago while on sabbatical. This prompted him to leave the scientific rigour of memory studies and create, research and promote guided autobiography (GAB), a process that is based on personal writing on life themes and sharing those stories in a supportive small group. Since those early days, there have been three books and countless research projects and articles written and thousands of individuals have gone through the process. The keystone of the Birren center is guided autobiography.

The benefits of participating in GAB are profound and far-reaching. GAB is built on a three-fold process: writing, sharing, being heard. First writing on the themes taps into the subconscious and students often recall memories long forgotten. By carefully writing and examining their past, they come to terms with old hurts, resentments, guilt and remember past achievements and successes. They grow into the present, unshackled by the past and more aware of what they have accomplished. Secondly, by sharing their innermost life stories,

TABLE 21.1 Organizations included in the StoryBoard Collaborative

Organisation	Founder Presenter	Summary
Birren Center for Autobiographical Studies (GAB)	Dr. James Birren, Cheryl Svensson and Val Perry	Created 40+ years ago by James Birren, trains instructors and disseminates the GAB process. Uses self-written story to help individuals experience more life satisfaction.
International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review (IIRLR)	John Kunz, Mary O'Brien Tyrrell	Founded 20+ years ago to develop the academic and practical applications of reminiscence and life review. Uses story for public education and sharing members' research findings. Programme of the University of Wisconsin-Superior.
Association of Personal Historians (APH)	Kitty Axelson-Berry, Sarah White	Founded 20+ years ago to train and support independent professionals who record, preserve and share their clients' life stories, using oral history methods to collect stories and create legacy products in diverse media. Dissolved 2017.
Life Story Library Foundation (LSLF)	Paulette Stevens, Paulette Stevens	Founded 5+ years ago to collect, save and share the personal life stories by providing accessible options. Stories are preserved in a permanent digital archive. Uses story to change lives and culture.

the heterogeneity in the group diminishes and members begin to see others as more like themselves. Participants see the commonality and underlying humanity in each person regardless of differences such as race, creed, gender and age. They become increasingly optimistic and invigorated.

The writers benefit from personal insights gleaned from the sensitive comments and feedback their classmates have shared with them. They begin to see themselves through the viewpoint of the GAB group and understand they may be more than their own self-critical eye ever thought they could be. Finally, the power of being heard is experienced. What is said and what is left unsaid are heard and accepted and validated in the small, actively listening group. This is rare in our society when everyone is typically listening with half an ear as they are thinking of how they will reply. Friendship and close relationships grow as the weeks go by and participants learn to value and trust one another from a very deep and intimate level.

The Birren Center offers a number of resources on their website. Books and DVDs are available, as well as published articles and writings from Dr. Birren. A top feature is the offering for live, interactive, online GAB instructor training courses. This trains individuals to facilitate their own GAB groups wherever they live. Since 2009, 300 people worldwide have completed this training.

An example of how guided autobiography affects individuals and community comes from Valrico, Florida, where GAB has been offered for the past ten years through the local library. Thirty to forty life writers graduate from this programme each spring. The students follow the typical GAB process: meet for ten weeks, participate in writing help for the first hour, then share their stories in pre-assigned small groups of 5–6 people. Typically, after completion, the students do not want GAB to end so monthly writing groups for the GAB graduates are organized. There are now 18 writing groups meeting monthly with over 120 life writers. Other support includes a quarterly newsletter, annual two-day trainings for the writing instructors, and a published anthology of the writers' stories (Perry, 2013). This is all accomplished through the support of the local *Hillsborough County Library* system and the *Friends of the Bloomingdale Library*.

David Isay (2007), the founder of StoryCorps, edited a book, *Listening is an act of love*. This title captures the magic that occurs in the GAB classes. Each writer feels safe to share their story and knows they are heard, see below for a list of positive results:

– Discovery of a love for writing and family history.
– Friendships.
– Improved self-esteem.
– A community formed within a population of transplants.

– Families made whole and strengthened.
– A history of the community, written by the people who live there.

Through GAB, people achieve their full potential and write their legacy for family and community.

2 International Institute for Reminiscence and Life Review: Mary O'Brien Tyrrell

Among the first people to conceive of reminiscence and life review as an academic pursuit were Dr. Robert Butler, an internationally recognized geropsychiatrist, and John Kunz, a psychotherapist. It was John's idea to convene an international conference for professionals in the field of reminiscence and life review and Dr. Butler provided enthusiastic support. What is now known as the International institute for reminiscence and life review (IIRLR) (n.d.-a.) evolved from the first conference. It is a programme of the *Center for Continuing Education* at the University of Wisconsin–Superior, with a mission to "further define and develop the interdisciplinary field of reminiscence and life review through discussion and collaboration in practice, research, education, volunteer and individual applications across the lifespan" (IIRLR, para. 2). Goals of the IIRLR:

– Promote increased awareness, knowledge, and skill development in direct practice of reminiscence and life review.
– Further reminiscence and life review research activity, providing a venue for discussion of results as well as guidance for future research.
– Establish a working definition of reminiscence and life review.
– Further integrate research and practice.
– Educate others about reminiscence and life review practice, research and ways to integrate the material in formal education, staff training, and volunteer organizations.

With John as Programme Manager, the first two of what would become international biennial conferences were held in Superior, Wisconsin in 1995 and 1997. Subsequent conferences have taken place in New York, Chicago, Vancouver, Orlando, San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston and New Orleans. Keynote speakers have come from the United States, Canada, the UK and beyond. Conference participants and IIRLR members come from the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, Northern Ireland, Austria and Brazil. The poster sessions, breakout groups and multitude of speakers make for lively discussions, both formally and informally. The open board meeting provides input from all, and biennial meeting papers and proceedings are published.

Online semi-annual newsletters list members' new publications in both journals and books, with appropriate citations for ease of access. IIRLR members include physicians, social workers, nurses, psychologists, counsellors, social service employees, educators, home care providers, activity professionals, oral historians, life narrative scholars, journalists, performing arts professionals, music and art therapists, clergy, chaplains, administrators, students, volunteers and other interested parties. Preconference workshops across this spectrum of professionals are also offered.

One of the educational tools available through the IIRLR is a 40-minute iconic video, *The joys and surprises of telling your life story* (n.d.-b.), which highlights professionals discussing the importance of life story work and responses by narrators and their families. Other tools include tips for interviewing relatives and guidelines for hiring a life story professional.

On the IIRLR website (n.d.-c.) one can find *the International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* (IJRLR), which publishes original works exploring the nature, function, and application of remembering the personal past within a wide range of research contexts and practice settings. Examples of fields incorporating memory for personal history as central to their focus include, but are not limited to, autobiographical memory, reminiscence, life review, oral history, and narrative studies. Recently the IJRLR issued requests for articles on cultural differences in the field.

The most recent development is the online certificate in reminiscence and life story work (R&LSW), developed with input from IIRLR and APH members, which prepares people to utilize the powerful tools of reminiscence and life review in assisting others to share their life stories (International institute for reminiscence and life review, n.d.-d.). This programme prepares professionals and students from wide-ranging backgrounds to engage in life story work in a variety of settings, as students learn the intricacies of the work including rewards, challenges and dangers.

A global survey of reminiscence and life review, which describes the thoughts and practices of life story workers, is posted on the IIRLR website (n.d.-e). Conducted by Barbara Haight at the request of John Kunz, it is helpful to students exploring the topic of reminiscence and provides new ideas to researchers. The institute provides connections for networking with like-minded colleagues.

2.1 *Association of Personal Historians: Sarah White*

"I love that I get to be a witness – that I get to watch history come alive" (Association of Personal Historians, 2015). Those are the opening words of a video produced by the *Association of Personal Historians* (APH) to promote the work

personal historians do to capture, preserve and share our clients' life stories. APH Founder Kitty Axelson-Berry started a professional organization for personal historians in 1994 because she felt the time was ripe to jump-start a new profession. That summer she had left a position as managing editor of an alternative newsweekly. At the same time, she wondered whether anyone else was already helping preserve personal histories as a profession and whether they were succeeding as businesses. She began to research like-minded professionals who understood the budding memoirs and life-review movement and who had started their own businesses. Her list of professional personal historians, with businesses scattered across the U.S. and Canada, grew. The first conference – and the official birth of APH as a trade association – took place in 1995 in Amherst, Massachusetts.

APH incorporated as a U.S. trade association for personal historians. Membership reached over 650 at its peak, with members enrolled in 18 regions in 10 countries, and 25 active local chapters. APH published a blog, monthly newsletter, and tri-annual professional journal. Its annual conferences offered significant opportunities for members to expand their knowledge and build their businesses. APH dissolved in May 2017, due to financial constraints and membership trends (White, 2017). Many trade associations and professional societies face similar threats that are eroding the need for formal organization like APH (Kahan, 2013). During its years of operation APH helped launch more than a thousand personal history businesses, leading to many thousands of personal history works that will be part of our world's historical record. APH leaves the field at a time when a broader recognition of the importance of saving life stories has emerged and is flourishing. Hundreds of personal history businesses operate today, providing a range of services.

Starting a personal history practice offers an attractive career for anyone in search of flexible, self-directed work that serves a purpose and feeds a passion. Many personal historians come from a background in communications, business management, sales and marketing, video production, teaching, social work, ministry, and social justice, among others. Personal historians help clients record, preserve, and share their stories. These are often the stories of individuals and families, but they also work with community groups, religious organizations, companies, and institutions. The products of the work take many forms – from printed books to video or audio recordings, or increasingly, digital archives that collect a family's stories, photos, and other precious mementoes online. Unlike genealogists, personal historians frequently research and write about people who are still alive. They step into clients' lives for a time, encouraging them to reminisce about events and experiences, and capture observations and lessons to create a legacy for generations to come.

A number of studies have shown that recalling one's life contributes to emotional, physical, and mental well-being. The benefits extend beyond individuals to their families, communities, and the world. Research has found that the more children know about their family's history, the better their emotional health, happiness, and resilience. Communities benefit from the local history captured in these stories, which add dimension to the record preserved in public and institutional documents. Historic preservation is aided by the collection of the stories of buildings' past roles in community life. Future historians require the kind of homemade history personal historians collect – informal photographs and domestic anecdotes – because evidence of this side of life is rarely preserved in official history. The aggregate result of the work is an unprecedented record of life in the 20th century and now, the 21st. Thanks to the Life Story Library Foundation, there is a home for this aggregation of story.

3 Life Story Library Foundation: Paulette Stevens

Life stories have the power to grab our attention, pass on values and traditions, and increase empathy, connection, and healing in the world. We synchronize our minds, pattern our lives, and become known to others through our stories. With the culture shifting and changing so dramatically, we need to bear grateful witness to our lives and share the wisdom of our experience – before our stories are lost. By providing innovative ways for the human family to preserve and share authentic and meaningful stories, we can truly connect and democratize history with the remarkable and diverse stories of ordinary people. Both as tellers and listeners, the storytelling process helps us remember who we are, awaken to possibilities for our future, and serve and care about one another in communities worldwide. We are encouraged to let go of stories that harm and hold on to stories that heal.

Paulette Stevens, founder and president of the *Life Story Library Foundation*, is a personal historian with a deep love of people and their life stories. While attending an Association of personal historians' conference in Las Vegas in 2011, president-elect Sarah White invited her to start a non-profit foundation. She jumped at the opportunity and established the Life Story Library Foundation (2012). Its purpose is to collect, save and share the personal life stories of our time as valuable recorded history, especially from voices that are not often heard. The Life Story Library became an official programme of the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions. At the event, volunteers video recorded the turning-point stories of over 200 religious and spiritual leaders from around

the world, creating the foundation of a treasure trove of meaningful human stories. Fascinating on-location documentaries will flow from this unique story resource and many others worldwide.

Opportunities have emerged for the Life Story Library to bring together powerful human stories, archive and share them online, and produce international quality documentary films. These include:

– Preserve the Past – Story Collecting, Archiving, and Publishing.
– Nurture the Present – Story Telling/Listening Products and Services.
– Transform the Future – Activities to Support Story, Healing, and Peace.

As a way to be local in practice and international in scope, Life Story Library is currently developing its *Legacy makers story wheel* system to generate positive collective energy. Like a stream of water turning a water wheel, the limitless flow of human stories in the world turns the *Legacy makers story wheel*. Six areas of focus work together at the community level: the storehouse; story circle; personal development; value creation; social action, and reflection. Through the power of story, this system strengthens relationships, encourages the creation of meaningful legacies, and energizes compassionate engagement in communities worldwide. It provides for a stream of life stories to flow into the Life Story Library and be freely shared to increase understanding and peace within the human family.

4 Conclusion

People are transformed when encouraged to talk about their lives with compassionate listeners. As leaders in our respective organizations, the members of the *StoryBoard Collaborative* work to amplify the already growing life story movement. We have come together from diverse paths and we will take different routes toward our goals. We look forward to future collaboration with like-minded groups and individuals, to guide the life story movement toward a fruitful and prosperous future.

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CHAPTER 22

Telling It as It Is: Women as Protagonists in Autobiographies

Anthonia Makwemoisa Yakubu

Abstract

The last forty years have seen a gradual rise in the interest and publication of autobiographies and biographies of Nigerians. These are interesting reads that give readers detailed information about their subjects and are sources of the history of the country at particular periods and phases. Biographies are documented life narratives; providing a literary platform to rewrite one's history; regret past mistakes; extol particular virtues that brought spiritual and material benefits to the lives of the subjects and his or her loved ones; and generally derive healing and satisfaction from the act of storytelling. This chapter discusses the biographical compendium of Nigerian women, *The women of valour*, *volumes 1- 3*, through a gender analysis of the status of women in Nigeria. Even though women are hardly seen as writers and as subjects of biographies, they are generally known for being good storytellers because of their abilities to create stories from everyday experiences. Through storytelling, women have moulded lives and created empowering spaces for themselves and others. Through biographies and autobiographies, women have debunked negative myths about their worth and abilities. Furthermore, through these narratives, women negate the patriarchal axiom that they should be seen and not heard.

Key Words

Women – Nigeria – storytelling – biography – narratives – patriarchy – healing

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1 Introduction: Life is a Story

There has been a lot of literature and testimonies on the benefits of storytelling, both for the narrator and the audience (for example, Kalu, 2000; Grace, 2011;

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Finnegan, 2007). Telling and listening to stories, in whatever form, is really what life is all about. While the act of storytelling gets better with continuous practice, it is generally believed that women are better storytellers because of their nurturing and caring abilities and their reproductive capabilities, especially when it comes to their relationship with children (Mulamba, 2013; Furniss, 1996). This view is largely supported by the social conditioning the two sexes are brought up with. Men and boy children are conditioned to be strong and aggressive, while women and girl children are conditioned to be passive and caring.

For Africans, stories encapsulate a people's worldview and philosophy; they are also used to train and prepare another generation for the task of community building and development (Baquedano-Lopez, 2001; Davis, 2014). This task of preparing another generation is hinged on the belief in continuity. For Nigerians, particularly, there is a palpable fear of a family name, heritage and tradition going into oblivion because of the inability of the woman to give birth to male children. Female children are not the heirs to a family's wealth; they leave, through marriage, into another family to bear that family's name and to be counted as part of the wealth of that family. But male children, wherever they are, keep the family hearth warm and alive through the bearing of the family name. This is one of the reasons why a wife's place in marriage is not confirmed if she has only female children. This is also why female children cannot inherit their late father's properties. These beliefs and expectations; mores and values; family tradition; taboos; gender relations; and social hierarchy, for instance, are transmitted to children through storytelling sessions.

Scholars have discussed extensively the physical, spiritual and therapeutic benefits of storytelling to both the narrator and his or her audience (for example, Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2011; Gibson, Gold, & Sgouros, 2003). Storytelling facilitates the healing process for those who have suffered loss, pain, and depression. Storytelling has also been extensively adopted by international and national agencies to change cultural biases and mindsets pertaining to such as gender; agriculture; maternal care; and medicine. (Grace, 2011; Griner, 2012; Drumm, 2013).

2 Women Tell Stories

In many African communities, women are believed to be the custodians and secret keepers of the culture, language and beliefs of a people. In line with this, they are highly regarded as priestesses and deities. This key role of women in the development of a community is closely related with another social role, that of motherhood. However, women, girl children, men and boy children live in a patriarchal world fashioned by men and built on male-oriented institu-

tions and structures that insist that the two sexes are biologically and socially created differently, on a superior/inferior dichotomy. This is what informs the body of gendered biases that prohibits women and girl children from the sense of speech, reflecting the common belief that women should be seen, not heard.

The fear and anxiety about the voices of women being heard, especially in public discourse, have led to the labelling of these voices, as, for example, "prattles", "baby talk", and "gossip". In daily discourse, particular proverbs are deliberately used to remind women and men of the former's place on the social ladder of importance as silent partners in the development of the family and community. Patriarchy seems to abhor a gathering of two or more women, because this portends that there would be speech, expressly given, and with this, empowerment. Some types of sayings, myths and proverbs are therefore adopted into the social mores and beliefs to dissuade speech and unity among women. Over time, they are believed to be true. Two of the most common gendered sayings are, "women are their own worst enemies"; and "it's a man's world". Importantly also, it is because of the belief that women are naturally loquacious that patriarchy imposed a cloak of silence on them. In informal parlance, it is generally believed that "men discuss, while women gossip".

However, women have adopted many means to change their voiceless situation by giving voice to their expressions so that they can contribute to the engaging discourse on gender and development. At the initial stage, one of the means adopted was through the arts. Women's voices were codified through the avenue of visibility; through such as, pottery; mat weaving; cloth weaving; cloth dyeing; beading; hair plaiting; wall plastering and design; and body design like the *uli,* among the Igbos. (Kriger, 2006). Through these artworks, women express their views about, for example, family, social institutions and patriarchy. In the process, they create for themselves empowering spaces of dignity and personhood.

Another means they rely on is civil protest, especially when it involves government policies that directly affect them and their livelihood. In Nigeria, the most popular of these protests was the Aba women's riots of November 1929, which occurred in the towns of Calabar and Owerri in the southeastern regions during British colonial rule. This riot, carried out by about 25,000 women traders, was to protest the special tax levied against them and their trade (Abaraonye, 1998; Bastian, 2002; Mba, 1982). The most culturally powerful means women adopt, but on very few occasions, is by stripping naked. Women have been known to come together, stripped half naked, to protest a draconian policy, action or practice of the authority (Messer-Davidow, 2002). Through these forms of protest, women voice their feelings and the unacceptability of the status quo.

It is erroneous to believe that the generic term, women, can be extended or broadened to mean that all women share the same experiences; that they are on the same social ladders of such as, class; religion; race; and ethnicity (see for example: Oyewùmí, 2003; Harris, 2005; Bryce, 2008) and that all women are aware and conscious of the gendered status quo. However, they do experience multiple discriminations based on sex; class; religion; race; language; culture; body types; ethnicity; generation; and culture. It is also erroneous to believe that the other men, the poor; low caste; uneducated; unemployed; and physically challenged, for example, do not have their own fair share of the challenges inherent in a patriarchal society. However, women are disempowered more on the basis of their being women. An unemployed man is still the head of his home and he is accorded that honour and respect based on the fact that patriarchal society says he is the leader, the tamer of women and children. So, in terms of education; healthcare; poverty; violence; and sexual abuse, women bear more of the effects of capitalist, patriarchal socio-cultural beliefs and policies (Filip & Logar, 2015; Oyewùmí, 2005; Kitetu, 2008).

These experiences provide rich material for women to weave stories from, either as direct participants or as witnesses. In narrating these stories, they become storytellers; protagonists; script writers; directors; producers; artistes; writers; actresses; and authors. Through these stories, women regain their earlier glory (Hiratsuka, 2010), which patriarchy does not talk about or celebrate, as, for instance, priestesses; deities; goddesses; masquerades; monarchs; warriors; and hunters.

3 Writing to Right

Patriarchal structures, institutions, value systems, and practices ensure that one sex is *ad*vantaged while the other is *dis*-advantaged. Social conditioning inscribes a cloak of silence and invisibility on women, and does the opposite for men. However, Nigerian women utilised the formal education they attained through the British colonial government, to (re) write their history. They also participated in the efforts at attaining independence for the country. Even though there is a rich documentation of the role women played alongside the men during the nationalist struggles for Nigeria's independence (Abdul, *et al.*, 2011; Parpart, 1987), men refused to let them into the corridors of power at the attainment of independence. The circumstances and challenges of colonial and post-colonial Nigeria notwithstanding, a growing number of women writers started to appear on the all-male literary space.

The first was Flora Nwapa, with her novel, *Efuru,* published in 1966, followed in 1979 by Buchi Emecheta's *The joys of motherhood.* Their writings address social expectations that have been used to castigate women, particularly infertility and lack of male children, polygamy and spinsterhood. Some of these novels and plays that call for better gender relations include Emechata's *The joys of motherhood* and *Second class citizen*; Onwueme's *The reign of Wazobia* and *Shakara: Dance hall queen*; Adimora-Ezeigbo's *The last of the strong ones*, *House of symbols*, and *Children of the eagle*; Okoye's *Behind the clouds* and *Men without ears;* Atta's *Everything good will come*; and Adichie's *Purple hibiscus* and *Americanah*.

Women's quest of voicing their opinions metamorphosed into bringing themselves to the centre stage. They shifted the discourse from talking about other subjects to talking directly about themselves. They took this responsibility from male writers and authors who have been the ones talking for them and telling them what to do. They started this creative act in an indirect way – through the writing of novels and poetry. They infused many aspects of the autobiographical into their writings in order to share with the discerning reader some of the challenges and joys they experienced.

For many women authors, out of fear of public scrutiny, a sense of privacy or just to create a feeling of mystery, some of their life histories and particular experiences are encoded in their works of fiction. Some of these novels include Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, or *The modern prometheus*; Zora Neale Hurston's *Their eyes were watching God*; Nora Ephron's *Heartburn*; Sylvia Plath's *The bell jar*; Sandra Cisneros' *The house on Mango Street*; Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges are not the only fruit*; Amy Tan's *The joy luck club: A novel*; Buchi Emecheta's *In the ditch* and *Second class citizen*; Mariama Ba's *So long a letter*, and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *House of symbols*.

However, many women have moved away from this practice and have started to write directly about themselves on an increasing scale through biographies and autobiographies. Women's writing about themselves reflect the feminist maxim that "the personal is the political", as calls for greater equity for women become more strident in many parts of the world. Women writers moved beyond writing about aspects of their life histories and moved into the genre of biographical and autobiographical writing, baring it all, so to say. While it may not be right to say that women no longer write about themselves in novels and poetry, they have readily embraced the biographical genre as a further means of telling their own side of the story.

There has been a gradual rise in the publication of autobiographies and biographies of Nigerians, men and women. Apart from giving readers detailed information about their subjects, these biographies have proven to be ready

sources of the history of the country at particular periods and phases, as seen through the eyes of the biographers.

A major observation made from the growing number of Nigerian is that in relation to the high number of biographies on men, biographies on women are just starting to trickle in. Women are hardly seen, in the strict sense, as writers, and as subjects of biographies. But in the loose biographical sense, women have written and rewritten their lives and experiences into their fictional works.

One of the findings of biographies and autobiographies of women is that we see a clearer pattern of a growing circle of female elites in Nigeria. The processes that lead to the making of female elites and the factors that encourage the sustainability of the growing circle are also clearly identified. For instance, a large number of these women acquired formal education that provided the skill of reading and writing. Biographies are veritable tools for identifying and tracing the small beginnings, expansion, and sustainability of a body of different categories of women who have through education, family connections, sheer luck, hard work, determination, persistence, to mention a few, have contributed immeasurably to the development of their communities.

Criticism against the biographical genre has been that it is highly subjective, a means by which the subject gives untrue and incorrect information in order to make himself or herself appear to be what s/he is not. It has also been seen as a platform to malign one's perceived enemies. While the biographies of men have received some form of attention based on the issues raised, biographies by women have most often been unduly criticised, not based on issues arising from the narration in the publications, but based on personal "vendetta" – critics have focused more on the person than on the writing. For example, the 19th century biographies, particularly those of Catherine Cappe and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Memoirs* and *Eighty years and more: Reminiscences, 1815–1897* have been criticised as being too Victorian, too insistent on the women suffrage movement, and the language too flowery (Smith & Watson, 2010; Symes, 2008; Jelinek, 1980).

4 The Women of Valour Biographical Compendium

Women of Valour is a three-volume biographical compendium of 56 Nigerian women from the different geographical zones of the country. Their careers/professions cut across business, education, politics, law, public service, private sector, sports, entertainment, etc. It was conceived because of the observation

that female children had very far, almost non-existent role models from the growing female public figures whose lives they have read about and can look up to. In the compendium, the pattern and factors that initiate, encourage and sustain these women as an elite group are mostly similar. The publications are patterned according to the career development/social rank/ages of the women. From the life stories of the 56 featured female elites, some core shared characteristics are observed and would be discussed.

It is important to clarify what we mean by elite in this chapter. By elite, we mean women who are generally on the top echelon of their career. Their doggedness, hard work and support from family and friends have facilitated their climb on the career ladder. These elite women have reached a particular point in their career where they can use their resources, including their popularity, to assert their individuality, and to also assist other women to be empowered.

From a study of the narratives of the 56 women many factors contributed to their success stories, one of which is the attainment of a good formal education. As girl children, the parents and/or guardians of these women enrolled them into the basic arm of education, the primary school. The colonial and post-colonial days of Nigeria then did not significantly encourage the education of girl children. Though the British colonial government and the independent Nigerian government established secondary schools across the country, boys had overwhelming opportunities to attend these institutions. Many women, especially those from the north, were forced to terminate their education for marriage, due mainly to the societal belief that a girl should be married on reaching puberty. This was what happened to Haliatu Abdu and Florence Aya (Makwemoisa, 2006), who had to stop schooling midway to get married.

The stories of these women also negate the common belief that women in the northen parts of Nigeria do not attend schools. The story of Haliatu Abdu and seven other Hausa women in the compendium confirms the reality that many Hausa women attend schools, even if their parents/guardians are not educated. The high number of girls from the northern Nigeria that attend secondary school can be deduced from the 276 girls that were abducted from a seconadary school in Chibok, Bornu State. Many of them go to tertiary institutions after their secondary schools. However, for women like Sadatu Shehu Mahdi and Hauwa Ibrahim (discussed in Makwemoisa, 2006), they deviated from the cultural norm as they got married *after* their university education, and to the men of *their choice*. These two women and the others were able to carve out empowering spaces for themselves through the attainment of good

education. Added to this factor was their being brought up by enlightened parents/guardians and getting married to equally enlightened husbands.

These elite women have encouraged female bonding by negating the common patriarchal belief that women are their own worst enemies. They have initiated various projects like scholarships, non-governmental organisations, professional groups or societies as platforms to help and empower women who are still struggling with patriarchal challenges and economic woes. For example, Joanna Maduka, one of the first female engineers in Nigeria, founded the Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigeria (APWEN). Through the activities of the group, young girls are placed on scholarships to facilitate their university education. These women's successes provide adequate proof to encourage young girls to aspire to be successful too.

A major factor that enriched the life histories of the women featured in the compendium is their relationship with people from other lands and cultures. This started from the state or federal-owned secondary schools they attended with students from different parts of the country and other parts of Africa. The experience with people of diverse natures and cultures impacted positively on these women and broadened their views, softened some of their preconceived notions about people, and further fuelled their desire to excel beyond their communities. Some of the featured women had their secondary schools outside Nigeria, or went for further studies abroad. Travelling is an educational tool that broadens one's horizons. These experiences contributed in no small measure to their success stories of today.

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CHAPTER 23

Mothering on Kibbutz: a Personal/Communal Story

Nancy Peled

Abstract

When I was a young woman, I travelled from my home in Toronto to Israel, where I stayed on a kibbutz in a work-study program. My plan was to return to Canada to continue my academic studies at the end of that year. Instead, I fell in love with a kibbutz member, and the kibbutz life, and chose to stay. That was over thirty years ago. I became a member of a secular kibbutz whose founders supported child-rearing theories of collective or communal education, including sleeping arrangements. Two of my four children were raised from infancy in the children's house rather than at home. This means that they lived in the children's house and visited our home. Does that mean I was a bad mother? The kibbutz defined mothering differently before 1991 than it does today. In this chapter, in order to gain insights through narrating these experiences, for myself and others, I investigate historical/theoretical foundations for the kibbutz communal education system and share my personal mothering narrative within that system, from the perspective of one not born into this unique sociological, historical, educational and cultural environment.

Key Words

Mothering narrative – kibbutz education – stories of mothers – narrative inquiry – communal child-rearing – family on kibbutz – mothering and community

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1 Introduction

When I was a young woman, I travelled from my home in Toronto to Israel, where I stayed on a kibbutz in a work-study program. My plan was to return to Canada to continue my academic studies at the end of that year.

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Instead, I fell in love with a kibbutz member, and the kibbutz life, and chose to stay.

That was over thirty years ago. I became a member of a secular kibbutz whose founders supported child-rearing theories of collective or communal education, including sleeping arrangements. Two of my four children were raised from infancy in the children's house rather than at home. This means that they lived in the children's house and visited our home. My philosophy was that of a modern woman coming of age in the 1970s, taking the necessity for gender equality to be a given. At the time, the kibbutz seemed to be a living utopian example of the expression of true equality. Children raised by professional child-care workers (called *metaplot* in Hebrew; singular *metapelet*) would mean the best of both worlds for mothers and children alike. There would be no conflict about being a working mother; mothers were expected to work in the kibbutz lifestyle. I was too ignorant of both language and culture to understand that the very name of the child care workers was a hint that the equality of the sexes was more equal for men than for women (Hebrew is a gendered language and *metapelet* is a feminine word).

These are some of the reasons I embraced the unusual, unique, and extreme, practice of collective child-rearing, despite misgivings expressed by my mother and sister, who was already a mother herself. Before I became a mother, I was attracted to the freedom promised *me*, unaware of what could, and would, change in my priorities after I gave birth. I did not understand that the kibbutz educational philosophy and lifestyle essentially co-opted my parental rights, even though I worked in children's houses for some time. I did not reflect overly deeply on the implications, because the story I told myself was that if I had agreed to become a member of the kibbutz, that meant I had to live by the kibbutz rules. And I was not yet a mother.

In the following, I present some historical context for the creation of collective child-rearing in kibbutzim. It should be noted that not all kibbutzim followed this practice. What is more, my kibbutz was one of the last kibbutzim to move children to family sleeping arrangements, and that came about as a result of the 1991 Gulf War, when children moved home and parents simply refused to return them when the war ended. Then I will discuss the general process of how a child grew up on a kibbutz like mine, with some of my reflections. In truth I am having difficulty dealing with the feelings these reflections have awakened in me, even though I am already a grandmother, so many years later. The stories I told myself, and those that were told to me, are not always enough to stave off haunting regret over important milestones in my older children's lives that I abdicated with barely a second thought. I find now that I am focusing on infancy and early childhood in my narrative here, perhaps

because for me that is the locus of my concern that I was a bad mother to my older children, even though what I now realise to be a type of *maternal deprivation* (Bowlby, 1951) was the norm in kibbutz society.

2 Historical Context

Kibbutzim (the plural of *kibbutz*) in general were founded by idealistic young people who believed in "the justice of economic collectivism and social equality" (Rabin, 1965, p. 1), rebelling, as young people have always done, against the culture dominant in the ways of their parents, mainly Eastern European Jews. The guiding principle for this new society was Marxian, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" (Van Ijzendoorn, 1994, p. 5).

My kibbutz was founded by members of a German Jewish youth movement, the *Werkleute* (workers), young socialist-oriented liberals, who originally sought to find a new alternative to their life in Germany. However, with the rise of the Nazis to power in the winter of 1933, the movement began to prepare to establish a kibbutz in Israel; for many, this meant leaving academic or professional studies, "to take up agricultural training for their new and very different life as pioneers" (Kibbutz Hazorea, n. d., n.p.). My father-in-law, one of the kibbutz-founding members, was a trained architect, for example. He became a planter of trees and builder of furniture on the kibbutz. In early 1934, the first members arrived and they lived in harsh, primitive conditions, in an abandoned Ottoman *khan* (inn) in tents, while they built their settlement, which was swampy terrain empty of vegetation, on land purchased from an absent Syrian landowner. It was not until 1936 that were able to actually move to the kibbutz. The original group of about 80 suffered from the harsh climate, typhoid, malaria and violence.

In this context, the decision to raise children collectively included concern for their health, safety and protection beyond the ideology, that this method will protect children from the traumas that accompanied life with tyrannical fathers and hysterical mothers, and other parental shortcomings in general. One of the founding female members referred disparagingly to the family environment as pampering (Kahana, 2015). But the guiding principle was an awareness of the role of child rearing in furthering the goals of the collective, by discouraging individualism, abolishing inequalities between the sexes, and bringing up a person who was better socialised to communal life (Gerson, 1978, p. 7). The kibbutz would be the child's extended family, children would not be dependent emotionally or economically on their parents as "the socialization and control of the children [is not] a prerogative of the family" (Rabin, 1965, p. 8).

This was a manifestation of the founding philosophy of liberation for women and children alike.

3 Collective Childrearing and Education

Thus, the world my husband grew up in was child-centred in every sense of the word, not to the exclusion of parental needs and /or rights, but certainly marginalising them. From the day they were born, they lived in peer groups, in houses suited to their needs both physically and psychologically, infant; toddler; kindergarten; grade school; and high school. By the time our daughter was born in 1981, some of the restrictions had been relaxed or abandoned altogether, but our children did not call our apartment home. It was the parents' home. There was no need for the children to have a bedroom in our home; they came to visit us from 4:00-8:00pm. They moved into the baby house after 3 months and mothers continued to get their children up in the mornings until they were eighteen months old. In the mid-1980s, the baby's sleep time at home was extended to six months, and that was the standard until 1991, when the Gulf War broke out and, suddenly and at once, the children all moved home. Those arrangements are part of the dramatic changes in the communal system that I lived through.

When I joined the kibbutz in 1979, babies were allowed to be at home with their mothers for the first six weeks, the length of maternity leave, a decision that had been taken by the kibbutz assembly in 1976. Prior to 1976, babies lived in the infant houses from the day they came home from the hospital and mothers were restricted in their visiting times. They came to feed the babies, change them, play with them, bathe them, freely during the first six weeks, but they were not allowed to take them anywhere without special permission. Mothers tell stories of parents and older siblings spending all afternoon in the infant house because the weather was too inclement to take the baby out. A strict feeding schedule was gradually introduced after those first six weeks and mothers, who had gone back to work part-time, were no longer allowed to come in whenever they wished.

My sister-in-law shared her stories with me from that era, standing outside the baby house, listening to her first-born son cry from hunger, but unable to go in until feeding time arrived. She cried along with him. These stories shocked me. I could not (I still cannot) imagine what that must have felt like for a young mother. How could anyone have thought that was good for the baby? Then my own mother told me about regulating herself with my older brother's feedings; this was the prevailing belief in the 1950s, when experts on child rearing

made mothers feel they could spoil their babies by feeding them on demand. This speaks directly to a deeply-rooted modern concern about being a good mother. New mothers feel inadequate, overwhelmed, uncertain and worried about how their behaviour may damage their children. As one psychologist put it, in the modern world, "Parental anxiety reigns" (Thurer, 2007, p. 331). Truth be told, I was relieved and even delighted to know I would have mature, experienced support as a new mother. My own mother was halfway around the world from me.

4 My Story as a New Mother

At the end of my first pregnancy in late 1980, the kibbutz assembly voted to allow the babies to stay at home for three months. My daughter was one of the first groups of infants to live in their parents' home for the first three months of life. The kibbutz provided a crib and dressing table for our home, which we returned when the baby moved out. Our room was so small that we did not have space for the crib and my husband built one that fitted on top of a small dresser we had. I don't remember being uncomfortable with putting our daughter to bed in the baby house. I trusted the *metaplot*, who were recognised by all as the authority on the babies in their care and certainly had more experience than I did in taking care of babies, as well as the women who did night guarding.

This was a duty all the women shared, one week a year (approximately) spent awake in a central office from 10 pm to 6 am (there was an evening duty that occurred more frequently from 8 pm to 10 pm) doing rounds checking on all the children, whose homes were equipped with intercoms, so if a baby cried we could hear them. Older children knew where the intercoms were and would get out of bed, stand under the intercom and call, "Guard, guard, come to" and would name their home. (They did not have to do this, it was something that was fun, similar to a child getting up to ask for water, another story, or whatever to prolong having to actually stay in bed and go to sleep. This usually happened in the early part of the evening). I knew how responsible I was when I was guarding, and I trusted everyone else was as committed. After all, their children were also watched over by others during the night. This was before I had any knowledge of how a baby develops, attachment theory, or even human nature.

Thinking about this time in my life, I am often overcome by feelings of guilt and sadness. How could I have left my babies to sleep somewhere other than

with me? How did I agree to raise my children in an environment that severely curtailed my contact with them? Simply put, everyone raised their children that way. Those who could not left the kibbutz.

We were lucky in that our children were good sleepers and we were seldom contacted in the middle of the night (by walkie-talkie before 1984, then by telephone that had been installed in members' homes) because our child had awakened but could not be comforted. When I came in the morning I rarely read in the guard log that they had awakened. I have a story to console myself: I always told the guard to call me if any of our children woke up no matter when or why. This comforts me when I read research about children raised communally that concludes:

> the quality of night care in the infant house has been poor because it has most often been provided by strangers who can offer only a precarious sense of security to the infants. On the other hand, maternal compensation is not very likely, because even sensitive parents may not feel an urgency to compensate for their absence during the night in a situation in which routinely implemented separations are the norm for all of the children in the community
>
> AVIEZER, *et al.*, 1994.

Instinctively I created an environment in which to be a good mother to my children. People being who they are, the guards did not always comply with my request, which annoyed me. Conversely, I once called the mother of a 7-month-old who had woken crying several times and could not be consoled, and she yelled at me over the phone, "Why are you waking me up?" It was my job to take care of her son; she had to get up for work the next day.

I also made sure to get up early so that I could be in the baby house, make my coffee and be sitting beside my child's bed before she or he woke up. I did this until they were 18 months old when I was no longer allowed to get the baby up in the morning. This was, for me, much more difficult, excruciatingly so, than putting the children to bed in their various homes where I could see they were happy and felt secure. (Another story: When our oldest son was two-and-a-half, he broke his collarbone in a fall and we received special permission to have him sleep at home while he was recovering. He cried and wanted to go to his bed. My husband slept on a mattress on the floor beside his bed in the children's house.) But I did not have the courage or confidence to refuse to obey the rule that caused me so much pain and I stopped coming to get the children up as expected.

5 Looking Back

I have also read research whose findings show that "early extensive child care and repeated separations do not necessarily interfere with the formation of close relationships between parents and children" (Aviezer, 1994, p. 110). This is a relief, but I do not need research to tell me I had, and still have, a close relationship with my children. I have talked to my older children, who have said that they do not blame me for raising them in the children's house, although they certainly have other complaints about my mothering, which actually strengthens my early, uniformed ideas about the kibbutz educational practices being good for children. Once they were sleeping at home they had to deal with all my imperfections, such as, lack of patience; angry responses; exaggerated demands; and expectations (from their perspective), just what the founders had wanted to protect children from.

When they were preschool age, we were together for about an hour during the day and around four hours between school and bedtime. It was easy to be present, available and indulgent. The older they grew, the more they controlled how much time they spent at our home. My husband remembers not going to his visit his parents for days at a time when he was in junior high school, when he was only twelve or thirteen years old! I did not allow that; but then I had been raised normally. These differences in our approach to our older children's behaviour created an opportunity for our children to try and play us off against each other and we learned how to compromise and present a united front. But the fact is, my husband's childhood and youth experiences were drastically different from mine and when the children moved home (our oldest was ten) it was his turn to have to adjust to an alien approach to our children's upbringing, parental responsibility.

And what of the gender equality that seemed so attractive when I first came to the kibbutz? Why, with all the ideological intent to liberate women from the bonds of child and house care, does research consistently point to a reality that is a contradiction of that ideal? This may be an interesting topic for another study, but the fact is, in both the workplace and the level and area of social involvement in kibbutz life, there are clearly gendered spheres that reflect a stereotypical, patriarchal approach to gender equality (Gerson, 1978). It is apparent most clearly in education; there were very few men working with children, and none with infants, and that continues to be the case today.

I understand that I am not to blame for mothering as I was expected to by the kibbutz in which I lived. I know I was not a bad mother and the kibbutz does not label mothers in that way. Yet, today, there is an undercurrent of discontent, disbelief and disappointment in the mother narratives prior to 1991.

My female friends, who were mothers with me, tell me their grown children say to them, "You weren't there for me", and, "Didn't you ever feel like there was something wrong with the sleeping arrangements?" Whether or not we are actually called bad mothers by others, it is clear that we often feel we were.

In closing, I would like to quote my daughter, who is an exemplary mother of three, "I had a wonderful childhood, but I would never raise my children that way". And in abandoning collective child-rearing practices, it is clear the kibbutz agrees with her.

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CHAPTER 24

Narrativisation of Identity in the Poetry as Life Writing of Lithuanian Women Émigrés

Irena Ragaišienė

Abstract

This chapter discusses narrativisation of identity in the poetry of selected Lithuanian women émigré writers in regard to the current critical debate on intersections between life writing and poetry. Narrativisation is discussed as engagement with narrativity to textualise the realignment of identity in response to the poets' experience as World War II refugees and then as immigrants to the United States. It is argued that their poetry was written as a response to exile, and in terms of generic identification departs from traditional definition of autobiography both in form and content. Generic indefiniteness is presented as a typical feature of writing by exiles. Exploring how the émigré poets narrativise their experience as exiles at the intersection between poetry and autobiography, the role of narrative as a means of ordering experience is discussed. This involves engagement with narratives of culture and interpretation of cultural scripts, by reflecting on cultural, historical and rhetorical contexts that shaped the autobiographical subjects' identity as exiles. This study challenges the depreciation of the personal in women's poetry and its relegation to secondary status, by arguing that non-canonical approaches to poetry and autobiography allow uncovering subjectivities overshadowed by culturally representative models of autobiography and poetry. The analysis is situated within the framework of the postmodern approaches to narrative, language, subjectivity and identity.

Key Words

Narrativisation – Lithuania – identity – subjectivity – poetry – émigré

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1 Introduction

This chapter examines how two Lithuanian émigré writers, Danutė Paškevičiūtė (b.1926) and Alė Rūta (1915–2011), narrativise, that is – as per definition – represent "in terms of a story or narrative" (Oxford University Press, 2018, n. p.) their poetic account of the realignment of identity in response to their experience as World War II refugees in Germany and Austria and then as immigrants to the United States. Narrativisation, then, as "the imposition of a narrative or narrative-like elements on real experiences or events" (Oxford University Press, 2018, n.p.) functions as a means of ordering experience and as "intrinsic to the process of understanding the human world" (Freeman, 2015, p. 30). In this regard, Peter Hühn and Jens Kiefer's analysis of poetry for elements of narrativity offers a useful stance for bridging poetry and autobiography. They claim that storytelling embodies "an anthropologically universal semiotic practice … used to structure experience and produce and communicate meaning, and is as such one of the basic operations at work even in lyric poetry" (Hühn and Kiefer, 2005, p. 1).

In terms of generic identification, the émigré poetry chosen for the present analysis is read as life writing. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson regard life writing "as a general term for writing that takes a life, one's own or another's, as its subject" and define it as "more inclusive of the heterogeneity of self-referential practices" (Smith and Watson, 2010, p. 4.). Thus positioned, the concept of life writing challenges the traditional understanding of autobiography as a linear goal-oriented writing by an exemplary figure of the time (Anderson, 2001). In respect to genre, truth, historicity and plot, Philippe Lejeune defines traditional autobiography as "retrospective *prose* narrative produced by a *real* person concerning his own existence, focussing on his individual life, in particular on the *development* of his personality" (Lejeune, 1982, p. 193; emphases added).

Feminist readings of autobiography bring to the fore the diversification of the autobiographical beyond the traditional understanding of autobiography as "developmental narratives" (Anderson, 2001, p. 9) that overlook the social and historical situation of the writing subject (Watson, 1993). The research highlights the relationship between gender and form of autobiography in relation to factors determining inequalities as regards self-realisation and conditions for writing larger scope narratives as, to use Estelle Jelinek's phrasing, "autobiography proper" is (Jelinek, 1980, p. xi). Jelinek holds that fragmented narratives like diaries and journals have been and remain most common autobiographical genres among women. She explains that "these discontinuous forms … are analogous to the fragmented, interrupted and formless nature of

their lives" (Jelinek, 1980, p. 19) resulting from multiple responsibilities and prescribed roles (Goozé, 1992).

Similar interrupted forms are characteristic of the autobiographical writing of marginalised groups (for example, see Guerra, 1998) as well as autobiographical writing of exiles (Polouektova, 2009). Azade Seyhan claims that "(auto)biographies of exile are often structured as out-of-bounds genre that captures the fluidity of the experience of migration and transition in a nuanced fashion" (Seyhan, 2003, p. 161). The exclusive characteristic of this genre, according to Seyhan, "is neither the singular self nor subjective remembrance but a collective memory".

The subject of the present analysis, the poetry of the selected Lithuanian émigré women writers, reveals many of the above mentioned formal features and thematic concerns in the way it narrativises the experience of exile and its effect on identity. In doing so, poetry involving autobiographical elements also generates discourse on contextual factors. As Maureen Whitebrook has stated, telling a story inevitably "includes response to others and their stories" (Whitebrook, 2001, p. 23), by extension interpretation of narratives shaping culture (for example, see Green, 2001).

The chapter discusses the poetry by Lithuanian émigrés, Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta along the lines of life writing as a diversified form of autobiography to show how their writing reflects on cultural, historical and rhetorical contexts that shaped their identity as exiles (Gill and Waters, 2009). One of the elements of the context that will be highlighted in the analysis is the responsibility assumed by Lithuanian writers in exile to write about the cultural identity of motherland where the traditional national values become endangered because of the foreign occupation. However, the poetic response of Alė Rūta and Danutė Paškevičiūtė to this call remained largely invisible in the Lithuanian exile literature. Their poetry on personal experience as exiles provides a typical case of reception of women's autobiographical writing, defined by Linda Anderson as follows:

> [I]t was not that women did not produce autobiographical writing but that it was deemed to be unimportant, crude or illegitimate, to fail to live up to the necessary test of "great writing"
>
> ANDERSON, 2001, p. 86.

This study challenges, to use Helen Farish's phrasing, "the continued use of 'autobiographical' as a term applied in a derogatory fashion to poetry by women" (Farish, 2011, p. 140) by arguing that non-canonical approaches to poetry and autobiography allow uncovering subjectivities overshadowed by culturally

representative models of autobiography and poetry. The discussion draws on the postmodern approach to narrative as an amalgamation of cultural scripts that affect subjectivity and self-definition (McAdams, 2008; Kearney, 2002; Whitebrook, 2001; and Green, 2001). It also refers to Peter Hühn and Jens Kiefer's analysis of poetry for narrativity and the treatment of time, in particular to discuss spatialisation and sequencing of time as a discursive ordering of experience, hence, self-definition. For the analysis of the intersection between poetry and autobiography, the discussion refers to feminist studies of autobiography (Gill and Waters, 2009; Gill, 2007), which question the limits of autobiography by seeking to bridge poetry and autobiography in regard to the concepts essential for both genres such as, to quote Jo Gill and Melanie Waters, "language, subjectivity, authenticity, reference and audience" (Gill and Waters, 2009, pp. 1–2).

2 Poetry as Narrativisation of Self and the Exilic Context

Both Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta were war refugees who fled Lithuania in 1944. That year, according to Rimvydas Šilbajoris, many educated people fled Lithuania "to escape Soviet rule" since "they remembered particularly well that the genocidal mass deportations of Lithuanians during the first occupations of 1940–1941 were directed most of all against the educated classes" (Šilbajoris, 1997, p. 211). As war refugees, Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta (the pen name of Elena Nakaitė-Arbačiauskienė) spent several years in Germany and Austria before they immigrated to the United States in the late 1940s. Both of them studied languages and literature, and wrote not only poetry but also prose (Girnius, 1969; Puzinas and Čepėnas, 1969).

In the first years of exile, many Lithuanian writers resorted to poetry to capture the exilic experience (Šilbajoris, 1997). New literary voices emerged in DP camps, and literature was regarded as a bulwark of national identity (Kuizinienė, 2003). At the *individual* level, the fact that many émigré writers resorted to poetry "to respond most quickly and sensitively to the fact of exile" (Šilbajoris, 1997, p. 211) resonates with Richard Kearney's contention that "Every life is in search of a narrative" (Kearney, 2002, p. 4). The emplotment of a personal narrative into narratives of culture or group, Kearney argues, "provides us with one of our most viable forms of identity – individual and communal". At the *collective* level, the commitment of Lithuanian writers in exile to treat literature as a repository of national values and as a means of retaining them can be explained with reference to periods in the country's history, such as the Lithuanian press ban during 1864–1904 and russification of the country

between 1863 and 1918, when writing and reading of national literature was regarded as opposition to the foreign rule and as a way of sustaining culture (Nepriklausomos Lietuvos literatūra 2018). It was only after the country regained independence in 1918 that "the writer could begin to consider himself an artist, first and foremost, and not primarily a patriot or teacher…" (Bukaveckas-Vaičikonis, 1982, n.p.).

Although the Lithuanian writers' in exile contribution to national literature was deeply encouraged, for women writers, especially for literary debutantes, as Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta were, it was not easy to enter the literary tradition. Paškevičiūtė's first and only collection of poems *Beyond Lament* (1961)[1] was reviewed as being personal narratives, lacking literary merit (Ragaišienė, 2006). Alė Rūta's first collection of poems *Without You* (1946)[2] was reviewed as a sentimental account of young woman's personal experience abounding in conventional tropes (Ragaišienė, 2006). Her later poetry also received largely negative reviews (Antanaitis, 1997, pp. 425–426).

The criticism of form and content can be interpreted in different ways: as a reading in terms of fixity of genres (Schenck, 1988) or as depreciation of the personal in women's poetry (Farish, 2011). The present analysis will look at the poetry by the Lithuanian women émigrés through the lens of the above cited Richard Kearney's view of narrative as the medium connecting to stories shared by culture to give structure to experience and to the self (Kearney, 2002). For the discussion of the intersection of poetry and narrative, a reference to Peter Hühn and Jens Kiefer is pertinent:

> Lyric texts in the narrower sense of the term (i.e. not just obviously narrative poems such as ballads, romances and verse stories) have the same three fundamental narratological aspects (sequentially, mediacy and articulation) as prose narratives such as novels and novellas. They involve a temporal sequence of happenings (which are usually mental or psychological, but can be external, for example social in nature), and they also create coherence and relevance by relating these happenings from a particular perspective… Finally, they require an act of expression with which mediation finds form in a … text
>
> HÜHN and KIEFER, 2005, p. 2.

Hühn and Kiefer highlight that in effect two main components comprise narrativity: "temporal organisation and linking of individual incidents to form

1 *Aš negaliu verkti* in Lithuanian. My translation of the title from Lithuanian into English.
2 *Be Tavęs* in Lithuanian. My translation of the title from Lithuanian into English.

a coherent succession, and mediacy" which is "selection, presentation and meaningful interpretation" of sequenced events "from a particular perspective" (Ibid., pp. 1–2).

Thus viewed, Paškevičiūtė's poem "The Longest Journey" (Paškevičiūtė, 1961, p. 12–13)[3] illustrates an attempt to sequence time through dialogic exchange implied in the reading of a letter, which the speaker/autobiographical subject identifies with a journey home. Given that a story can be told only in relation to stories of others, as Maureen Whitebrook (2001) and Mary Jean Green (2001) have argued, in Paškevičiūtė's poem the reading of the letter may be interpreted as suggesting imagined participation in the stories of the nationals left behind and in the national narrative at large. Concerning *selection*, *presentation* and *interpretation* of events in Hühn and Kiefer' sense, the poem creates an impression that it is the realities of the past/memory that dominate in the speaker's construction of reality. Whereas the presence is limited to one reality, which is the letter, and the emotion that it incites (Hühn and Kiefer, 2005). Given that letters were the only means of communication for the majority of families separated by World War II, the poetic rendering of the strong feelings that receiving the letter from homeland evokes can be read through the lens of the definition of lyric poetry as response to an emotional moment to "interpret its significance" (Gill, 2007, p. 84). Although "The Longest Journey" lacks many of the formal elements of the lyric, read as life writing, it echoes James Olney's statement that the verticality of poetry offers a cognitive journey towards comprehension of the present moment and the memories that it triggers (Olney, 1980). This statement acquires an added significance in light of the fact that, in the situation of exile, the representation of self in terms of cause and effect relationship was hardly possible.

References to material reality in universal symbolism, such as *the house*, *the trees* or *the road*, may be read as details constituting the *autobiographical pact*, that is, winning the reader's trust, in Lejeune's sense (Lejeune, 1982). They also present an instance of *mediacy* as per Hühn and Kiefer (2005), which is selection and presentation of detail to represent a desire for knowledge about the current situation of areas that these symbols represent. Similar discursive forms occur in reconstructing lost contexts and the obscurity surrounding them in most poems under analysis. Alė Rūta depicts homeland as ghostly, intangible spatiality ("Today", 1946, p. 13),[4] as a reflection on life cycles and change versus stability encoded by the stone ("A Dreaming Stone", 1964, p. 42),[5]

3 "Ilgiausia kelionė" in Lithuanian. My translation of the title from Lithuanian into English.
4 "Šiandien" in Lithuanian.
5 "Sapnuojantis Akmuo" in Lithuanian.

or as the community that the speaker longs to embrace ("A Dream of Return", 1964, p. 35).[6]

On the other hand, some poems by Paškevičiūtė, such as "Some Time"[7] (1961, p. 50–51) and "Death",[8] (Ibid. p. 34–35) present a typical case of émigré writing as "a confession" and delineation of "a life story" (Gulliksen, 2001, p. 67), providing details about personal life of the poet and the context of writing. These poems, like most of the poetry under analysis, present a case of temporal polarisation into the present and the past to mark fragmentation of identity, wherein sequencing of time through spatialising it in narrative, following Kearney (2002), embodies *storying* the self across temporal planes. The significance of creating albeit fragmented accounts of experience can be explained with reference to Dan McAdams's statement that

> [T]he stories we construct to make sense of our lives are fundamentally about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are, and might be in our heads and bodies with who we were, are, and might be … in the social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and culture writ large. *The self comes to terms with society through narrative identity*
>
> MCADAMS, 2008, pp. 242–243. Emphasis in the original.

Paškevičiūtė's and Alė Rūta's poetry shows that, in composing the self within temporal and spatial in-betweenness, the theme of intimacy looms large amidst the sensitivities, hardships and dangers, surrounding the experience of exile (Bromley, 2000). In most of these poems, many of which are written as the lyric, the speaker hardly ever loses a feeling of oneness with the community, differently from the emphasis on interiority in Northrop Frye's description of lyric poetry as "the genre in which the poet … turns his back on his audience" (Gill, 2007, p. 84). Such indefiniteness in terms of genre conventions and the entwining of the personal and the collective resembles Azade Seyhan's description of life writing by exiles as generically fluid expression of "a collective memory" (Seyhan, 2003, p. 161).

In light of the above, Paškevičiūtė's and Rūta's poetry, which univocally intertwines personal and communal experiences solidifies into testimony, and as such becomes, as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2001, p. 282) would have it, "an act of testifying or bearing witness" of personal fate and that of the

6 "Sugrįžimo Svajonė" in Lithuanian.
7 "Kada nors" in Lithuanian.
8 "Mirtis" in Lithuanian.

nation. What is inscribed in their poetry as life-writing has also been witnessed by their activities for the cause of the homeland left behind. In the United States, Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta worked at Lithuanian Sunday schools (Girnius, 1969; Puzinas and Čepėnas, 1969). Alė Rūta wrote over thirty books: (autobiographical) prose, several plays for children and poetry books on personal and Lithuanian topics. She was also an active member of several literary and cultural organisations in exile (Puzinas and Čepėnas, 1969; Žvilgsnis į Alės Rūtos gyvenimą ir kūrybą, 2018).

The captured self-reflectivity in Danutė Paškevičiūtė's and Alė Rūta's poems, whether as "autobiographical truth" or "a construction" (Gill, 2007, p. 84) evokes Daphne Patai's claim that "a particular version of one's life story may become an essential component in one's sense of identity at a given time" (Patai, 1988, pp. 8–9.). Every poem, then, presents a momentary awareness of identity, structured through narrative, against the backdrop of tensions, resulting from "the ever-present bitter knowledge of dispossession" (Šilbajoris, 1997, p. 211).

3 Conclusion

Given these points, the poetry of Danutė Paškevičiūtė and Alė Rūta illustrates a case of diversification of autobiography as life writing. Bringing these non-canonical texts into focus is undertaken as an attempt to divert the critical lens from literary excellence to cultural scrutiny of narrativised identity and the discourses that shape it.

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CHAPTER 25

Sharing Stories: an Interactive, Interdisciplinary Approach

Tracy Ann Hayes

Abstract

This chapter brings together reflections from both professional and personal perspectives, to address the interdisciplinary potential of storytelling, both as an approach to teaching and research, and as a means for communication. I do all that, and more, by focusing on the particularities within an experience that was professional, personal and emotional. I share this with you in story form and, in the method advocated by Hustedde and King (2002), invite you to slow down your mind and let my words sink beneath your skin, so that you reflect on the meanings of your own experiences. The ellipsis points are placed purposefully at the end of five sentences within the story to signify transition points at which to pause and focus the conversation. This is an evocative methodological approach I have adopted for my most treasured encounters, which I refer to as "magic moments". I interpret these through creative non-fiction, taking great care to critically analyse each moment, to extract meaning and avoid it being merely a "nice story". It is so much more than that.

Key Words

Story – storytelling – interdisciplinary – interactive – evocative – emotion – creative non-fiction – pedagogy – research

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1 Introduction

This chapter explores experiences from a small-scale project, contextualised within, and complementary to, a larger-scale doctoral research project. My research (Hayes, 2017) makes use of a blended methodology of hermeneutics, autoethnography and action research. I view my research as emergent,

■ Reference Hayes (2017) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

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open-ended, innovative and creative. I embrace methods that invite introspection, reflexivity and dialogue (for example, Ellis, 2004; Mitra, 2010; Richardson, 1998). I have found this to be an effective way to explore and understand situations whilst remaining mindful of the influence of my values, beliefs and emotions. This chapter is written in a similar style to other publications (articles, book chapters and conference presentations) that form part of my doctoral research (Hayes, 2017), which share the aim of encouraging a critical conversation about the research and pedagogical approaches we use.

■ Reference Hayes (2017) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

I conducted an action-research study with the explicit purpose of piloting stories as a pedagogical tool. This was in response to students' feedback, which we had gathered through both informal methods (conversations and flip-chart evaluations) and more formal methods (end of module evaluation forms). Initial analysis suggested that students felt there was a tendency towards over-reliance on lectures involving PowerPoint presentations, whilst they would prefer more interactive, discursive activities. I used these preliminary findings to define my research question, "Are stories effective as an interactive pedagogical tool in HE?" The next phase of the research was a seminar session led by a colleague who guided seventeen students through a short creative-writing activity. I joined as a participant observer, sharing the experience of writing with the students, then switched to co-tutor to read a short story (interpreting findings from my doctoral research) written to exemplify contemporary issues in childhood. I asked students for feedback, using semi-structured questions as prompts; their responses, with my observations, were recorded in a field notebook. The following week, together with a third colleague, fifteen of the seventeen students and I went on a trip to the UK's national centre for children's books, Seven Stories. We had planned to follow this visit with more discussions, however due to external factors, the final two weeks of term were cancelled, and students returned home early. As an alternative, students were invited to participate in an anonymous online survey.

A moment from the trip is creatively interpreted to form the central point from which the discussion radiates. This is an evocative methodological approach I have adopted for my most treasured research encounters, I call them *magic moments*, which I interpret through creative non-fiction. As advocated by Denzin (2014), each moment is critically analysed to extract meaning and avoid it being merely a nice story; it is so much more than that. The language is consciously provocative and evocative: it is "… scholarship [that] reaches toward an audience, it cares. It wants to make a difference …" (Pelias, 2004, p. 12), whereby the reader is invited to imagine themselves alongside us, within the story, sharing the experience (after Hustedde & King, 2002).

'Come over here, read this …'

One of the students calls me over, continuing 'It's so sad'. Her gaze holds mine as she speaks, gauging my reaction. When she sees she has my attention, she points to a display cabinet in front of us. I look down and see medals, laid out with an explanatory note from the author, a famous book illustrator. I read the words, 'In memory of my uncles, who died in the Great War'. I look up at the student as she whispers to me, 'They were so young, they were our age'. Her voice tails off into a shared silent space that words cannot fill, yet is over-spilling with emotion …

'Wow! Look at this over here – we can dress up as different animals'. 'Ha! Look at me, I'm a goose'. 'Yeah, well I'm a fox, so better watch out you goose!' Roused from our thoughts, we turn to see some of the other students have found the dressing-up area and are having fun, playing and teasing each other. Our shared moment expands to include them and becomes more light-hearted and playful. They begin taking *selfies*, posting them to the internet to share with others. 'OK, we need to move on now, we're running out of time …'

The words of the facilitator signify that playtime is over and that the workshop is due to start. We have booked a session on the importance of reading in early years' work. We all appear somewhat surprised that the emphasis here is not on phonics and the technicalities of learning to read. Nor is it on the process of reading and our role as practitioners within this. No, the focus is on reading for pleasure, for enjoyment, and we are introduced to the world of picture books for grown-ups. The facilitator asks us to suggest reasons for why it is so important to include beautifully drawn pictures in books, and we respond as a group with a wide range of academic and theoretical reasons. She nods and agrees with them, then says, 'For some children, and their families, this is the only way they can access art …'

The room falls silent …

It is a silence of continuing contemplation …[1]

The ellipses at the end of six sentences within the story indicate places at which to pause and focus the conversation through asking specific questions. These are addressed through reference to literature and research data, interweaved and used to support and explore my findings. This is unapologetically interpretive and subjective. To ensure research integrity, prior to dissemination, the story was first shared with the young woman concerned, to secure her

1 Story written by the author, specifically for this article, to illustrate research findings.

permission and approval of my interpretation of events; then it was reviewed by colleagues.

2 Come over Here, Read this ...

The student's words extend to me an invitation to share in her experience; this is in sharp contrast to our more usual interactions, whereby I, as the lecturer, invite her to join in with the experiences I have chosen. This is the planned world of learning outcomes as specified within the module descriptor; these form part of the third-year curriculum, which, in its turn, forms part of the validated degree programme, as approved by the external examiner and the university board. There is typically little room for spontaneity or unplanned learning, with more of a focus on learning outcomes that develop graduate skills, employability attributes and encouraging the use of digital technologies to offer flexible learning. In contrast, the findings from my project suggest that the inclusion of non-digital technologies can be vitally important. Sharing stories, in both oral and written form, has been part of the human-learning experience for centuries, providing a recognisable way of constructing meaning (Sarantakos, 2005). Through story, we learn to recognise and become familiar with things and people, learning to interpret and understand the world. Within this particular undergraduate programme, there has been some use of story before, however, this has not been effectively recorded or evaluated. Many of the students profess to dislike reading in any form, fiction or non-fiction. This is noticeable within their struggles to cope with academic reading and referencing. This awareness reinforces the need to find more appropriate and effective pedagogical approaches.

In Higher Education (HE) settings, there is some freedom to interpret the curriculum as it is delivered, as long as it meets agreed learning criteria and fits within monitoring and quality assurance processes. One of the main features of a curriculum is that learning and assessment are planned and guided, primarily by the teacher/tutor/facilitator of the learning experience, informed by knowledge of the learners likely to be involved. This process is called curriculum alignment and is an inherently problematic concept as Parker highlights, "'Alignment' contrasts with the 'webs' of data, science, social contact and interactivity with which we work and in which we sometimes feel trapped" (2013, p. 959). The aligning process can inhibit our ability to follow student-led curiosity and interest; to join with them and read what they find intriguing. For more than fifty years, Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), with various revisions, has provided the foundation for much teacher training; however, it is highly contestable as

to whether it can effectively meet current learning needs, which include creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills, as well as a flexibility from both teachers and learners (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013).

3 A Shared Silent Space that Words Cannot Fill, yet is Over-spilling with Emotion …

In contrast to traditional learning environments of lecture theatres and seminar rooms, the open, neutral space of the centre allows a shifting of the inherent power differential in the teaching relationship; this is a space we are exploring together in a relatively unplanned way. Most of us have not been here before and do not know what to expect when there are no prescribed outcomes to meet. The *felt* presence of a third person, the author/illustrator whose exhibition we are viewing, ensures this becomes a multi-faceted experience as we read, interpret and reflect on his words. This is an emotional experience, silently acknowledged. How can this be evidenced or assessed? One of the main criticisms of Bloom's Taxonomy is that it places emphasis on factors that can be measured and as a result the affective domain is often overlooked in favour of the cognitive and psychomotor domains. Yet there is considerable research (*e.g.*, Pierre & Oughton, 2007), which suggests the affective domain represents the gateway to learning. I agree with their approach, aiming to teach from the affective domain, so that learning influences attitudes, as observed in actions and behaviours, values and beliefs. For me, learning is emotional, social and part of a holistic experience (for example, Jarvis, 2005; Mayes, 2005; McKeachie, 1976). I firmly believe that reflexivity is key to this; both teacher and student individually and, whenever possible, as a shared process.

It has long been recognised that learning is a social and cultural experience (Rieber, 1997), but what does this mean in practice for a lecturer and/or researcher? I have no desire to hide behind a curtain of academic objectivity. I include myself in the process "… on behalf of others, a body that invites identification and empathic connection, a body that takes as its charge to be fully human" (Pelias, 2004, p. 1). I further agree with his methodological approach that there is so much more to research with people than assumed authority, critical argument and establishing the correct criteria. In my teaching, whilst remaining clear about my professional boundaries, I also talk about my personal experiences when they relate to the theme of a session, so that learning is informed and brought to life. I actively encourage students to offer their perspectives and reflect on their own experiences. However, I also remind them to "share with care" so that they do not over-share, or make themselves/their

peers, uncomfortable or stray too far from the topic. This interactive, shared approach should not be rushed; it needs to be considerate and supportive.

There are many ways of sharing our experiences, including technological, as in the selfies that were shared across a range of internet-based platforms. As academics, it is important to keep up to date with modern technologies and, where appropriate, to embrace them within teaching and research. However, what is the potential impact of this shift in focus away from the immediacy of the experience, as shared by those present, to one for an uninvolved, absent audience? Unfortunately, there is insufficient time and space to explore that here, however it suggests an area for future research.

4 Ok, We Need to Move on Now, We're Running Out of Time ...

There is an all-pervading feeling of running out of time, juggling too many, often competing tasks. Sarah Marten asserts that this is a challenge experienced by academics at all levels (Marten, 2016), who are attempting to negotiate their way through the rapidly changing world of HE (Temple, 2014). This can be even more problematic when working with non-traditional students, enrolled through the widening participation agenda, many of whom require additional support to adjust to the demands of tertiary education. Working within a policy of widening participation brings many challenges, emphasising the need to understand and address hierarchical relations, inequalities and power differentials that underpin diversity (Burke, 2012; Thompson, 2011; Gosling, 2007). This is further compounded by large group sizes, making it difficult to address the wide range of individual needs. Within all this, it can be difficult to find time and space for playfulness, creativity, art, for story.

■ Reference Marten (2016) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

5 The Only Way they can Access Art ...

The facilitator's comment was a stark reminder that not everyone has equal access to art in all its wondrous forms; visual, written and oral. Research, for example by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), shows that students who engage in a wide range of reading activities are "... more likely than other students to be effective learners and to perform well ... Proficiency in reading is crucial for individuals to make sense of the world they live in and to continue learning throughout their lives" (2011, p. 1). I do not believe that we do this well enough in HE, where the emphasis is more on reading with a purpose, to inform and underpin arguments, applied

to substantiate opinions, within a focus on career employment. And yet, creativity has been identified as a graduate employability skill (Confederation of British Industry, 2012) and is a prime outcome of higher education, justifying the application of more creative, artistic and poetic methods. When I use the terms creative or creativity, like Rothman, I am referring to the philosophical "… watchful, inner kind of creativity [which is] not about making things but about experiencing life in a creative way; it's a way of asserting your own presence amidst the much larger world of nature, and of finding significance in that wider world" (Rothman, 2014, para. 5).

The specific questions from my questionnaire help to move this chapter towards a close as I return to re-address the research question, "Are stories effective as an interactive pedagogical tool in HE?" I will address each question from the questionnaire in turn, offering an answer based on my interpretation. Students' responses confirmed my observations that whilst the majority welcomed the opportunity to write their own stories, some found it challenging, not perceiving themselves as creative; they would have benefited from additional support and time.

How can thinking and expressing ourselves in this way be different from other forms of communication? There were a range of responses, including, using your imagination; ownership of words; freedom of expression; and "There can be a little bit of magic … the brain works in a different way". The students' responses to the question, "What can be challenging about writing creatively?", indicated the need for a sensitive, considered and supportive approach that allowed for a mix of short-timed pieces and longer, thoughtful pieces. "What can be enjoyable about writing creatively?" The students' responses, as before, highlighted imagination, creativity and escapism; as well as the perception that this can be good for mental health.

The findings were inconclusive as to which of the activities the students preferred. This would have been more effectively explored through discussion than via a questionnaire. However, the students were unanimously positive about the use of fictional stories as an effective way to explore contemporary issues, exemplified by the comments, "Yes as it can capture the audience"; and, "… stories are part of our lives". With regard to going on a trip as part of introducing this interactive approach, they were also very positive and reported that they would have liked longer at the centre, to explore, play and read; they felt rushed.

In answer to the question, "Are stories effective as an interactive pedagogical tool in HE?", these findings emphatically respond, "Yes, they are", indicating there is a genuine need to be more creative, interactive and playful in considering the way we convey our messages so that we encourage participation and

critical thinking. However, with large group sizes, and students with diverse support needs, this approach needs sensitivity, careful planning and, arguably the most precious resource of all, time. Within this small-scale project, my interdisciplinary approach enabled me to take an overview of the topic, address it from differing perspectives, and be intuitive and responsive. This is a contextual and specific approach and it is wise to remember the caution from Rees and Porter (2015, p. 91) that, "… what can be appropriate in one situation may be quite inappropriate in another". The same can be said of stories; when using them it is important to be clear about their purpose. I reflect on the words of Pullman, who said that "… the act of true reading is in its very essence democratic … it's like a conversation. There's a back-and-forthness about it" (Pullman, 2004, n.p.). This has been confirmed by my findings, and I would further argue that it is a conversation that has the added benefit of sparking further conversations; an active and dynamic process, the importance and effectiveness of which should not be overlooked in the rush towards more 'modern' technological approaches.

To end, like the room in the story, I now fall silent, a silence of continuing contemplation as I am left with many unanswered questions, and, I suspect, with many questions as yet not fully formed. It is my sincere hope that these will continue to trouble and unsettle me (Meyer & Land, 2003) as I move onwards in my academic career. My research and teaching will remain grounded in, and informed by. practice to bring about effective and meaningful change, which is the essence of action research.

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PART 6

Historical and Spatial Perspectives

Introduction to Part 6

Tracy Ann Hayes

The five chapters in part six continue the travelling theme employed within chapters in the previous section, to explore narratives from historical and spatial perspectives enabling us to cross time, space and boundaries. This part offers much to challenge our thinking around narratives. By taking a historical perspective, we attempt to relive the stories of people who came before us, and when we retrace their steps, we embody those same spaces, traversing both time and space. This process can be effective in bringing to life past events and in developing a greater understanding of present ones. As highlighted by Andrews (2008, p. 205), "New experiences, and new understandings of old experiences, bring with them a new perspective not only on our own lives (…) but on the way on which we make sense of the lives of others". This is certainly evident from the chapters in this section.

■ Reference Andrews (2008) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

The first chapter uses an innovative approach as Caroline Kisiel provides a performative-dialogue, presenting her twenty-first century traveller-self with an accompanying cast of traveller-characters. She blends textual reading/travellers' voices with her scholarly inquiry/personal travel stories in a narrative that crosses time and space, as she looks for the interconnections and the story beneath the collective stories. She posits the idea of considering travel as research into the self, highlighting that conducting historical research while progressing in her own life narrative became a travel narrative in itself, bringing new understanding to both stories.

In the second chapter, Mădălina Moraru analyses the perspective of time and space in advertising stories, considering the way that an advertising story shapes the message being conveyed. Mădălina's study sought to find the connection between space-time references and product categories/narrative techniques. She highlights that telling stories should not be seen as a simple action of creative communication, but as a form of knowledge and experience.

There is a shift of focus in the third chapter, towards approaching narrative from the perspective of historical psychology, as Szymon Czerkawski explores the methodological application of historical psychology in research studies of ethic systems. Szymon's aim is to analyse how decision making may be influenced by ethics, the rules regulating behaviour and conduct on the premise of moral good, using a fascinating case study of warrior clans in 14th century Japan. Ethics, in particular the ethics of remembering, is also explored within the next chapter as Remko Smid analyses two of Claudio Magris's post-postmodernist

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historical novels. Remko explains that stories provide a useful way for conveying ethics, as they are "constantly influenced by the forces of order and disorder, integrity and chaos, and, indeed, good and evil" (Chapter 30).

The final chapter, bringing this section to a close, is by Prue Bramwell-Davis with a wonderful exploration of the ways we can understand artefacts in our lives in the form of stories, and how the work of the hands in making and using objects creates unique ways of knowing and learning. As she reminds us, "As time passes, things are seen in new ways, the conversations change, and reflection can lead us to what may have changed in ourselves" (Chapter 31). This is a thought we will revisit and explore further in the final conclusion to the book, as we reflect on our experience of collaborating to present this global perspective on storytelling, from so many diverse perspectives, as a coherent and cohesive whole.

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CHAPTER 26

199 Years of Crossing the Atlantic: a Nineteenth-Century British Travel Writing Scholar Dialogues with Her Travellers

Caroline M. Kisiel

Abstract

This is the story of my transatlantic life experience as an American pursuing a PhD in the UK for five years in dialogue with some British travellers that have comprised my scholarly inquiry for over ten years. Some travellers include: Morris Birkbeck, who left England for Illinois in 1817 seeking agricultural opportunities; he published his travelogue in 1818 inviting others to join him. William Cobbett, a well-known social reformer and outspoken critic of Birkbeck, Published his travelogue in 1818. William Faux responded to Birkbeck's call; he criticized America for the practice of slavery, but enjoyed the plantation comforts slavery afforded. Frances Wright wanted to "fix" America's slavery problem but otherwise saw the nation as a utopia; she travelled as a 20-something single woman and published her glowing report in 1821, returning in 1824 to implement a slavery-solution. Frances Trollope, vitriolic critic of American manners, ended up frustrated in Cincinnati after following Frances Wright and not getting what she bargained for. These travellers responded in print to each other, or knew each other personally. The chapter will offer research alongside reflections on travel, identity, nation, and privilege. As a storyteller and performer, my presentation will be a performative-dialogue: my twenty-first century traveller-self with a cast of traveller-characters.

Key Words

Travel writing – national identity – nineteenth-century British travellers – early America – privilege – narrative inquiry

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1 The Stage

This chapter consists of a *performative-dialogue* between myself and select British travel writers I have researched for over ten years. While not a script, this chapter presents a discussion of concepts that "set the stage" for this intertwined story, offering a foundation for the performance through background material, context, and ways of conceptualising both the narratives and my process as traveller, scholar, and storyteller.

2 The Scholar

It all started with Google. The Scholar wanted to do a PhD for practical reasons; as a creative and free flowing type, this was a rare moment. But a year of teaching inner city high school in Chicago led to a desire to stay in higher education, where she had taught for six years. Googling *PhD in the Humanities* brought forth a programme in London, where she had never been. An application, a phone interview, and an acceptance led to the discovery of a place to live at a scholars' residence in central London, and a need to overcome the fear of flying; it led to a comfort and normalcy in crossing the pond, international friendships and colleagues.

It also led to discovering a curious community in southern Illinois founded by English travellers in the early nineteenth century, which garnered feverish attention in its day. Why was this the case, the Scholar wondered? In the twentieth century, to Midwesterners from more developed, affluent or urban areas, Albion, Illinois – the small southern Illinois town that now remains from that English settlement – would be called, with some disdain, a *Podunk* town, a town of uneducated inhabitants who may not think much in voting for a President, a town where it is no surprise to find a store that sells "guns and jewellery", a town with no McDonald's, and only a Dairy Queen. This is not a town anyone would flock to today; in contrast, it is the perfect picture of a town one would want to leave.

The Scholar moved to the United Kingdom (UK), and began to look at the United States (US) through others' eyes, those from over a century before, and those in the present day. She pursued the PhD in the UK for five years, returning to the US to continue teaching in the summers. She travelled to the Podunk town, discovered the Dairy Queen and the jewellery store, but also the historical society, and gravesites of travellers who had emigrated there.

The Scholar uncovered the stories of the many who followed the first travellers to the English settlement. "What were they thinking?" she asked, "what did

they come in search of?" which set her off on a scholarly inquiry that has now lasted for over ten years, through PhD and academic conferences, and adjunct faculty work to assistant professor. She also discovered that those books by the first English travel writer that she had never – that no one she knew had ever – heard of, could be found down the road in her hometown Illinois public library, buried in the bottom stacks, like any good Illinois public library should properly have in their holdings. She was the first to check them out.

3 The Travellers

The travellers in question published travel writings starting in 1818. Morris Birkbeck, disgruntled with agricultural opportunities in Britain, sought a new home on the then-Western frontier of America in 1817. Birkbeck's two books, *Notes on a Journey from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois* and *Letters from Illinois* were published concurrently in 1818 in Britain, to wide acclaim. The publication history of Birkbeck's two books also testifies to the public interest in them: *Notes* went through eleven English editions in two years, as well as German, French and Dutch editions. *Letters* went through at least seven editions in 1818, and was translated into French and German in 1819 (see Sutton, 1818). They instigated heated debates about whether land in Illinois was suitable for Englishmen to farm, whether English civility could survive outside of England in a perceived wilderness, and whether there would be companionship with countrymen in this place. From 1818 to 1825 there were at least 28 reviews of Birkbeck's books in the British press, in such prominent publications as *The Quarterly Review, The Edinburgh Review, The Times,* and *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register.*

■ Reference Sutton (1818) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

Frances Trollope, vitriolic critic of American manners, ended up frustrated in Cincinnati after following her friend, Frances Wright, and not getting what she bargained for. Trollope's book, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, soared to popularity in 1832. In its first year, *Domestic Manners* went through four editions, and a fifth edition with revisions was published in 1839. Critical response in the British and American press was unexpected and constant, much of it negative (for example, see Neville-Sington, 1997; Super, 1986). Primary critical reviews of Trollope's work in the time period are comprehensively documented by Nisbet (2001). Trollope's commentary added to the tense discourse underway from the time of Birkbeck, but also fuelled further critique of the American people, notably until about 1835.

The travellers that wrote in the interim years between Birkbeck and Trollope ranged in motivations, places they chose to visit or avoid, opinions about

Birkbeck, commentary on the land, landscape, American people, habits, manners, morals, and slavery. Leading up to Trollope's publication, they effectively set the stage for her words to take strong root.

Birkbeck (1817, p.141) called for changing "a wilderness into a fruitful field" and declared "I cannot be satisfied without seeing that remoter country" (Ibid., 79–80), which propelled him onward toward land that met his criteria in southern Illinois. Henry Bradshaw Fearon (1818, p.427) cited emigrants who "expect to find the territory of Illinois "paved with gold", while William Cobbett, a well-known social reformer, was anxious about Englishmen farming in Illinois:

■ Reference Birkbeck (1817) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

■ Please check the unpaired quotation mark in this sentence "expect...".

> for the plain, plodding *English farmer*, who simply seeks safety for his little property... for such a person to *cross* the Atlantic states in search of safety, tranquillity and gain in the Illinois, is, to my mind, little short of madness.
>
> 1819, p. 295, italics in original

Later, Adlard Welby (1821, p. 148) commented that vessels of emigrants were "...looking forward to the West as to a land of liberty and delight – a land flowing with milk and honey – a second land of Canaan". Frances Wright wanted to *fix* America's slavery problem but otherwise saw the nation as a utopia; she travelled as a 20-something single woman and published her glowing report in 1821, returning in 1824 to implement a slavery-solution (Wright, 1821; Payne-Gaposchkin, 1975, pp. 221–251). James Flint (1822, pp. 171–172) commented on Americans from a residence of several years on the north banks of the Ohio River that "polite behaviour, talents, education, and property, have influence in society, here, as in elsewhere" and that "manners of Britain seem to predominate". Richard Flower resided in Lexington, Kentucky, enjoying the comforts of his residence in a slave state while he condemned Americans, wondering "whether it is likely that Americans will escape the judgments with which God has afflicted other nations, while their land is infected with personal slavery..." (1819, p.97). In the same year, John Woods (1822) commented on the boatmen en route to the English Prairie, a "rough set of men, much given to drinking whiskey, fighting, and gouging...and sometimes biting off each others noses or ears" (1822, p.255). Conversely, William Newnham Blane was astonished by a skilful backwoodsman who "cut down the largest tree, and the power he has of making it fall in whatever direction he pleases" (1824, p.305) in contrast with "a foreigner, who must labour for years in order to attain the same skill" (1824, p.305).

■ Reference Wright (1821) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

■ Reference James Flint (1822) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

Trollope's focus on manners in 1832 following these commentaries blasted summary judgements into this heady climate the travellers had created: "I should have liked Cincinnati much better if the people had not dealt so very

largely in hogs" (1832, p.52); "All the fruit I saw exposed for sale in Cincinnati was most miserable. I passed two summers there, but never tasted a peach worth eating" (Ibid., p.37); "The abundance of food and the scarcity of hanging were also favourite topics, as proving their superiority to England" (Ibid., p. 96).

British abolitionist, Edward Strutt Abdy (1835) later chronicled antislavery activity in the Ohio Valley. Assessing slavery more carefully than other travellers, he recognized the arbitrary division of the Ohio River: "The North holds the muzzle, while the South rivets the chain" (Ibid., p.363), noting aspects of Indiana and Ohio civic life that "assimilate[d] them to slave states" (Ibid., pp.385–386). Birkbeck, Trollope, and the travellers who wrote in between them form a bridge across a 17-year span in British/American history about travel to and settlement in Illinois and the Ohio Valley; they present a window into the flow of ideas that traversed the Atlantic in this period.

4 Theoretical Possibilities

My performative-dialogue is a non-fictional conversation between myself and these travellers. Weaving my story with their stories I listen for interconnections and look for ways we can *speak to* each other. What is the story beneath our collective stories? What is the new story arc that emerges when our stories intersect? This chapter offers theoretical underpinnings of this inquiry, and serves as an offering toward thinking about the study of travel and research into historical travel, and considering travel as research into the self. To unpack these ideas, I will draw on concepts in narrative inquiry, slow travel, the *contact zone*, and adult learning theory.

I am moving the research I have conducted for many years that has had an "eye" quality into the arena of an "I" quality, to use Cheryl Craig's (2005) distinction between conducting historical research (eye) versus narrative inquiry (I). Liora Bresler indicates, "narrative inquiry pervades our experiences of time and social existence" (2006, pp.21–43). Quoting Minca and Oakes, Jillian Rickly-Boyd offers that "travel… heightens and… makes more accessible" the "combination of movement through space and experience through time" (2010, p.275). Conducting historical research on these texts while progressing in my own life narrative has become a travel narrative in itself, bringing new understanding to both stories. As tourism stories are told and retold they are in effect *relived*; this then gets infused into one's own autobiography, asserts Rickly-Boyd (Ibid., p.275).

Craig, et. al., explains that narrative inquiry is the use of story to study human experience, it "focuses on people, places, and things, all of which are in

intellectual and moral relationship" (2014, pp. 127–128). I seek to make sense of the prominent place these travellers and my relationship to them holds in my own life story; how might the study of their stories have affected my own intellectual and moral awareness? Craig also discusses the differences in approach between narrative researchers (who more fluidly focus on story) and historical researchers (who more directly order inquiry by time). She asserts that narrative research has a "live, unresolved quality" (Ibid., 216); to this point, I often consider the historical research I conduct on people who have long passed as having a somewhat "dead, resolved quality".

I also find the concept of slow travel helpful. Dan Kieran (2012, p.19) notes, "paradoxically, now that we can move so quickly around the world, most of us don't actually travel anymore – we only arrive" and "…if I'm not travelling slowly, I feel I'm not really travelling at all". Kieran discusses our modern culture's quick holidays with lofty goals, our movement inside and habitation of various "boxes" (cars, offices, homes) where we drown out the natural world and are not attuned to its pace (Ibid., p.145).

I joke with colleagues that it takes me awhile to "travel two centuries into the past"; to move from twenty-first century demands and re-enter my focus on nineteenth-century travellers. There are truths in this – it takes me eight hours to cross the Atlantic, while it took them seven weeks or more; it takes me seconds to Google something, whereas they sent letters, and awaited replies. After hours or days of student focus, teaching, marking, I have learned it takes me often a full day or more to return to the spaciousness within that grants access to historical study. I live in the age of high-speed travel, yet I continually return to the age of slow travel. These are different bodily experiences, nuanced and imperceptible to the outsider, but experienced as an acute energetic difference within.

The construct of the *contact zone* is another important concept. Contact zones, an idea put forth by travel writing scholar Mary Louise Pratt (1992, p.4) are:

> social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today.

Birkbeck's English Prairie was a contact zone: the English met the wilderness and transformed it; they met people and land that they had to grapple with. The Ohio Valley of the nineteenth century was a contact zone: a place where slave and free met and clashed, separated by the line of the Ohio River, a *social*

space of confrontation between slave society and free territories, where White and Black minds and bodies grappled, both ideologically as well as physically. As a twenty-first century scholar meeting nineteenth-century British travellers, I also reside in a contact zone: our meeting space forms an *internal* contact zone. The contact zone is in the space of ideas; my ideas and their ideas meet and grapple as I seek to understand them and translate them into twenty-first century scholarship.

I am also a professor in a college of adult learning. I assist undergraduate and graduate adult learners in designing individualized programs of study, which involves coaching learners to be self-directed in their research, reflective in their process, and to draw on lived experience in service of learning. Experiential learning, writing as a way of reflection, and facilitated dialogue for reflection are key aspects of this work.[1] Why can I not apply adult learning principles that I work with in my twenty-first century teaching practice to my own process as adult learner engaged in nineteenth-century historical research?

5 Third and Fourth Stories

What is the view of my story and these travellers' stories examined side by side? What might happen if we were to talk to each other, breaking the historical wall of silence? It turns out that beyond the story of the Scholar and the story of the Travellers, there could be third and fourth stories to uncover.

In the summer of 2005, I sent out a series of e-mails to friends in the UK and Europe, collectively named *Notes From Across the Pond*. While I wrote "in an effort to understand this strange time in the US and my own somewhat alienated relationship with my nation of birth" (Kisiel, June 21, 2005), I wanted to gently guide and educate my friends about how all Americans are not conservative Republicans, and that there is a tapestry of American culture that gets lost in blanket judgements from outsiders.

In one instalment of *Notes* I discussed how the US media inundates its population with a glut of news and news sources. I noticed the perception that "if you think you're getting LOTS of news, you might also tend to equate that with getting the COMPLETE news", and encouraged my readers to continually ask, "what is NOT being told here?" (Kisiel, August 16, 2005). The reviews in the nineteenth-century press of Birkbeck's venture could be equated to the

1 See the works of the following adult learning theorists related to this point: Kolb, 2004; Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner, 2007; Taylor, Marienau and Fiddler (2000).

inundation of news sources we experience today; I have explored what is not being told by these critics, but is there more to explore with my other travellers? Three dynamics emerge here: fast travelling information, slow travelling information, and the perception of the travel speed of information. My twenty-first century eyes perceived an "historical frenzy", but did Birkbeck and his respondents feel that way… even though their words appear that way *to me*?

As it happened, a significant event occurred in each country during the summer I wrote my *Notes*: the 7/7 bombings in central London, and Hurricane Katrina in the US, my heartstrings pulled and stretched by both. At the same time, I revelled in cheap gasoline prices, sought to clear out possessions stored in a family basement, and enjoyed "…countless cable TV channels… wide, air-conditioned aisles in stores… and tacos (the authentic kind)". I wrote:

> These concurrent happenings force a question for me, that being, where exactly do I live, do I park my possessions, do I pledge my allegiance, do I care about what is happening in a deep and connected way? I can only say for right now that it is on both sides of this pond, and I expect this exchange will continue for some time.
>
> KISIEL, September 5, 2005

While I returned to the US to live in 2008, I continue to feel in 2016 that I reside on both sides of the pond. My travel story mirrors these British travellers' stories; there is a side-by-side effect I feel in stepping outside the prescriptions of traditional scholarly research to look at what that story might be about. But I also find myself curious to ask the travellers questions – or rather, approach their texts *as if* I could hold a real-time conversation with them. Their words have been speaking to me for years; what conversations have been lurking just below the surface?

6 Who Is the Guide, Who Is Traveller?

As living beings in a different time, these British travel writers once embodied the spaces they travelled through; in a later time, I now embody these same spaces. They travelled from their home in Britain to tour or settle in the US; I travelled from my home in Illinois to settle in Britain, and travel there now while I continue to research their paths. Together we have created a continuous travel trajectory, nearing 199 years across the Atlantic. Michel De Certeau (1984, p.125) has noted that "stories go in a procession ahead of social practices

in order to open a field for them". But whose story here has proceeded first, mine or theirs?

I once found it humorous that I had to travel to Britain to discover the writings of Birkbeck, only to return to Illinois and find his books in my hometown public library. I now find this symbolic. While the spark to write a PhD in the UK led me forward, and I have guided my path in this research and writing journey, the fields of these British travellers' texts continue to open up new possibilities for me. This begs the question, who is the guide, and who is the traveller? I lead myself through my twenty-first century responsibilities continually back in time to listen to them, but their stories have gone ahead of me in a procession and have opened not only the field of my PhD, but the field of my professorial work. They have led me to fields of additional scholarship and even to this very research group and conference. While I guide my study of these travellers, they guide me down new paths toward new fields.

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CHAPTER 27

Representations of Time and Space in Advertising Stories

Mădălina Moraru

Abstract

The perspective of time and space in advertising stories is meant to uncover the brand image and product features, according to appropriate narrative techniques. Every commercial sequence happens in a specific space and time, following both the brand evolution and the strategy. Given that an advertising story shapes the message based on the characters involvement and the proper scenarios, this study aims to reveal categories of time and space as they are outlined by the research.

The study was carried out through discourse analysis applied to a sample made up by advertisements running from 2005 to 2008 in Romania, equally shared between global and local well-known brands. Therefore, this chapter aims to reveal significant narrative strategies related to campaign objectives and branding equation. The main hypothesis of the present study states that a relevant advertising story should focus on consumption time and space representations for any brand and product in order to achieve a high level of consumers' loyalty.

Overall, the entire study strives for discovering on the one hand the association between space and time references in advertising stories, and on the other between product categories and narrative techniques.

Key Words

Romania – space – time – advertising – storytelling – brand – discourse Analysis

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1 The Role of Storytelling in Communication

Telling stories should not be seen as a simple action of creative communication, but as a form of knowledge and experience as Mossberg (2008, p. 196)

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asserts: "In general, stories speak to our human needs and make our lives meaningful". In other words, people reveal their needs by telling good stories, and, frequently, these narrations enrich their meanings and values. Besides, Man cannot live beyond the stories or without them and, that is why, he could be easily called homo *narratus* as long as his/her mind strives for organizing facts, actions, ideas, encapsulating that information in narrative shapes. What does a *good story* mean? Definitely is the one, which renders the sense of being in a world of meanings. According to Nigam (2012, p. 569) "Better storytellers are likely to be better planners, judges and so on, and their flexibility in framing the story in new contexts and settings would probably be highly adaptive". Indeed, listening or telling stories involves, firstly, a high level of flexibility towards the audience, and then towards himself, as a storyteller.

Equally important is the fact that stories can be used in any other fields, such as business, marketing, visual art, communication and even management because of their credibility and diverse means of sharing ideas. In this respect, Stephen Denning (2006) points out the most important directions fostered by narrative skills in business and leadership. Accordingly, he revealed eight different narrative patterns that entirely account for the meaning of efficiency in storytelling: sparking action, communicating who you are, transmitting values, communicating who the firm is, fostering collaboration, taming the grapevine, sharing knowledge, and leading people into the future. In his view, those patterns help leaders put their ideas across and interact with employees as much as possible.

Furthermore, every storyteller's efficiency can be assessed based on the number of organizational conflicts: "The key to the effective use of narrative in communicating values lies in narratives that reveals how the conflicts of values get resolved" (Denning, 2006, p. 46).

2 Advertising Tells Its Own Stories

In this context, the advertising field offers a range of opportunities to solve ordinary conflicts, given that products meet consumers' needs according to a very simple scheme, usually called Procter & Gamble strategy: problem-solution-revelation. This is nothing more than the narrative pattern of straightforward, informative advertisements. When it comes to clarifying the concept of narrative advertising, scholars employ three factors in their definitions, as, Chingching Chang does, for example, by underlying the role of consumers, consumption and products: "Advertising that uses narratives typically depicts product consumption or the experiences or consequences of product use" (Chang, 2009, p. 52).

Advertising has to call to action every single consumer by involving them in sharing the suitable ad message in order to increase their level of loyalty by using ingenious narrative techniques. These storytelling techniques offer the opportunity of building a very strong and creative image of brands, on the one hand, and of developing their progressive evolution, on the other hand. Applying storytelling techniques to improve, create or even recreate brand images involves a synthetic and appropriate management of plot, space, time, and narrative frames whenever a brand sells its history. In this view, consumers recognize themselves in brands' experience, both sharing the same knowledge.

Nowadays, it is no longer the agency mission to establish a bridge between consumers, products and brands, but it is the narrative campaigns that activate this connection directly. Escalas (2004) highlights the way consumers themselves create meanings for brands, so that they become completely compatible with them as Wen-yeh Huang (2010, P. 309) points out: "If the meanings of a brand match past experiences in consumers' memories, deep connection could be formed". Accordingly, brands are alive through storytelling strategies, because they share old, actual or potential experience. This explains the new genre called *life advertisement,* which consists in developing a slice of real life of consumers. One of the product/service categories that has been encouraging this ad format for some years now, is the mobile phone. Brands like Vodafone follow users during their day-to-day experience and there seems to be no difference between the real consumers and their advertisements counterparts. The feeling of authenticity is more than strong in this case.

3 Space and Time in Narrative Advertisements

In terms of narrative structures, a homogeneous direction stems from a range of views and theoretical approaches, as Escalas underlines by saying that a story involves "one or more episodes consisting of actors engaged in actions to achieve goals" (Escalas, 1998, p. 273). Space and time should be definitely added to these aspects, as they are mandatory to contextualize a good story. In advertising, space is more related to the products themselves, while the brand establishes the link to consumers. Commercials not only describe the chronology of the events, but also insist on timelines and space representations, which are quite significant depending on the product category. For example, FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) are strongly associated with nature, open space, green or blue colours, unlike electronics which refer more to domestic nature, enclosed space.

When it comes to cars, Aupers *et al.* (2012) analyse their frames in advertisements by using the opposition between nature and technology, so that any landscape is dominated by a Mercedes, Audi or any other brand. Accordingly, even if it is "attractive and pleasant", "nature is portrayed as passive, accessible and controllable by means of technology-especially for those who own this particular car, as the car company wants the spectator to believe" (Aupers *et al.*, 2012, p. 5).

Personal space versus collective one represents another approach of this concept. Technology provides the tools to ensure this private life by using headphones (noise-cancellation devices), for example. This individualistic space is appropriate to the young generation, more exposed to gaming and Internet, while collective and public space integrates consumers into the same area where noise-cancellation devices are not necessarily present. The geographic criterion stands for a variety of space representations in touristic advertisements that offer consumers a worldwide perspective of all their possible choices. Moreover, this example works with multiculturalism and identity as Cole (2015, p. 131) asserts: "Tourism and the study of tourism has become explicitly such a multi-dimensional field where globalization directly confronts locality and identity".

When discussing about timelines, narrative commercials focus on scenarios events (chronology), action rhythm, specific techniques related to the products' life cycle and anthropological perception of time. Originally, time, as a concept, was not under discussion in marketing and advertising, as it happened in philosophy, anthropology, literature and other fields. Against all odds, advertising is recognized today as one of the best host of time representations, because advertisements rely on cultural values as McLuhan (1964, p. 14) very inspiringly underlined:

> Historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections than any society ever made of its entire range of activities.

Actually, advertising gives a practical meaning to time perception by using consumers' memories, products' and world history, and, thus, providing a suitable insight into encoding its messages. Sending time-related messages draws consumers' attention in our society, because managing our daily schedule has become a real problem. As a result, contemporary lifestyle has generated another need and desire: saving time. This aspect debates the first two perspectives mentioned above: events chronology and their rhythm. According

to Wolburg (2001, p. 697), a product saving time "has meaning in a society that defines time as something that can be commodified: spent, saved, wasted, or used".

His approach leads us to Hall's (1983) theory regarding monochromic and polychromic time, concepts that can be associated with cultures and societies as well. Monochronic time refers to linearity in action, as following one single task till the end with no interruptions, while, polychromic time means performing multiple tasks simultaneously. Advertising generally appeals to multitasking consumers, who are equally preoccupied by their career and family, performing different roles in these circumstances from general manager to doting father or mother. Therefore, women are seen being still fresh at home after a long day at the office, where they also had numerous responsibilities.

Time representations such as nostalgia, anticipation of pleasant moments and seizing the day have specific roots in ex-communist countries and not only. Carter (1994) unfolds four concepts that could explain the previous time representations: laments for the lost years; aspiration to escape the day-to-day life; attempts to relive the past and carpe diem. Obviously, we can say that interesting narrative scenarios of advertisements could be easily developed by using introspection, anticipation, parallel plot, retrospection or any other creative technique.

Last but not least, the anthropological perspective towards time refers to a broad range of eight possibilities identified by Hall in 1983 and mentioned by Wolburg (2001) as well. All these elements could be identified in ads as following: biological time, personal time, physical time, metaphysical time, microtime (culturally differentiated), synchronic time, sacred time and profane time. The last two types describe, in our opinion, the mythological and magic time, specific to fairy tales and symbolic stories.

All these views upon time and space are great arguments to see advertising scenarios as more sophisticated creations, whose role goes beyond the economic interest. Furthermore, by analysing space and time in various advertisements, this study could reveal innovative ways of connecting product category, consumer's involvement and brand image.

4 Research Methodology and Sample

In terms of research methodology and the chosen sample, this paper focuses on discourse and visual analysis that help us identify time and space

landmarks. The current qualitative research was conducted on a sample of 100 TV advertisements belonging to different worldwide markets and product categories, whose commercials ran from 2008 to 2015. The sampling follows the main criteria of selection, which are: developing at least two sequenced scenarios; identifying space and time landmarks of the action; presenting different narrative techniques; analysing audio-video spots to assess various levels of storytelling. In addition to this aspect regarding space and time references, the present research strives to identify specific narrative strategies that could be related to each campaign objectives and branding equation. Given the main goal of this research, this study aims to answer the following questions:

– Where does the plot happen in most ads?
– What kind of time references are often highlighted in ads scenarios?
– What is the connection between space, time and narrative strategies?
– What are the main narrative formats for advertisements?

5 Findings

In the following lines, we intend to analyse each question one by one, referring to qualitative aspects and comparing the global campaigns with the local ones. We consider that the market specificity makes the difference in terms of space references, while the brand authority (its history) provides time-related details. Besides, research findings should permanently take into consideration product categories, given that they meet consumers' needs under special space and time circumstances.

A. Where does the plot happen in most ads?

In this respect the study focuses more on the following criteria of space delimitations in the present corpus: open (i.e. landscape) or closed (i.e. domestic); city vs. village; personal vs. private; virtual vs. real. Investigating our corpus, there is no doubt that city regarded as open space is more taken into consideration both at global and local level, with 35 commercials, 21 respectively. Still, at local level Romanian nature and authentic villages (representing 22 ads out of 50) are the most important factors that account for the best strategies to promote domestic brands, whereas the global brands stick to significantly fewer examples.

Moreover, the virtual space is a new illustrative criterion for a brand like Google as much as the magic space is a reference for fairy tale and legend in the corpus addressed to local customers. In both corpus, global and local, open

space is granted similar attention (in 40 ads, 37 respectively), which means people like sharing their experience wherever it's possible. A specific detail for such product categories like mineral water and dairy is the connection with tradition that is village in the present analysis.

B. What kind of time references are often highlighted in ads scenarios?
Regarding the time references, this research is conducted by using Hall's anthropological classification (i.e. biological time, personal time, physical time, metaphysical time, micro-time, synchronic time, sacred time and profane time) and also another classification generated by events order. According to the latter criterion, the analysis looks for the following time-related landmarks: linear time (one single action with no interruptions), circular time (starting and ending at the same point), fragmented time (plot is disrupted from place to place), historical time (the past), anticipated time (the future).

The first criterion stems from the many roots in our sample, given that the research revealed interesting differences between local and global ads. Thus, sacred time, occurring in fairy tales, magic stories, legends or myths, emerges from the local sampling as the main characteristic (in 25 ads), whereas, the personal time is highly underlined by scenarios of the global commercials (in 24 examples out of 50). This argument mostly explains the relationship between time-related landmarks and narrative techniques in the investigated advertisements. The magic or sacred time is constantly connected with anniversary and brand celebration in the first corpus meant for global brands.

C. What is the connection between space, time and narrative strategies?
Our corpus displays a wide array of narratives starting from fragmentation and disruption (in 24 ads), events order (16), anticipation (14), metamorphosis (11), retrospection (10), inter-textuality (5). The other 20 techniques left (such as ellipsis, repetition, suspense, introspection, alternation and meta-textuality) do not appear in both global and local corpus advertisements. When it comes to fragmentation, disruption and metamorphosis, we have some reasons to observe the strong connections with the personal or the sacred time.

Retrospection is a reference point for historical roots of a brand or consumer's biography, while anticipation could be a sign of both virtual space and disruption. Advertisements clearly reveal a focus on chronology and events order. Regarding the space, fragmentation, disruption and inter-textuality quit frequently play the game of changing action frames, which gives a high level of dynamics to the plot.

D. What are the main narrative formats for advertisements?
Investigating the main formats involves recognizing the purpose of advertisements, on the one hand, and understanding the connection between the plot and products, on the other. Therefore, ads formats refer either to classic stories

such as fairy tale, myths, biography, legend or to innovative and well-structured advertising scenarios such as chronology, slice of life, meta-commercial or game. In terms of narrative formats, chronology is dominant in 29 advertisements, yet more at global level where the action is often linear. This technique entirely renders brands and characters' life, while biographical and historical format (13) point out more brand's evolution.

Investigating further, we see the connection between the second narrative format frequently used i.e. slice of life (in 21 commercials overall) and such successful techniques as fragmented action, disruption, short retrospection, as well anticipation. Slice of life adverts describe short moments when, for instance, lovers get engaged, celebrating the event in the family by drinking Murfatlar, an exhausted football player makes a decision (Snickers: *You are not you when you are hungry*) or something just happens for few seconds. Fairytales, legends or cooking/ eating rituals and also recipes highlighting sacred and magic time refer to brand origins, production, consumption and even advertising stories. Romanian commercials prefer legends or mythical stories as main narrative techniques, thus explaining the origins of mineral water, beer, and dairy. In fact, one of the mineral water brands was given a mythical name that always prompts a connection with sacred time: *Wonder Spring*, with the slogan *the legend water* (Izvorul Minunilor).

6 Conclusions

Overall, space and time references always frame advertising stories, not only in a very interesting way, but in a very efficient one. The visual background displays a range of possibilities to develop innovative narrative advertisements, which could be organized in series and could make use of important details of brand credibility (i.e. country of origins, product's qualities, packaging, associations with nature). The verbal message places narrative events in a temporal axis, which, in its turn, generates very rich creative derivatives in terms of commercials and channels. Thus, it enables the brand to develop according to strong long-terms strategies. These research findings reveal a wide range of time and space representations in advertising; some of their best references define creativity in many cultures and societies. Moreover, it is obvious that narrative techniques and storytelling in advertising could be infinitely and creatively combined in most successful adverts. As a result, time and space landmarks are meant to be equally appealing not only to potential product consumers, but to the clients and, ultimately, to media consumers.

To sum up, advertising stories cannot develop their scenarios in narrative advertising outside time and space references, especially due to frame compression (advertisements last between 20 and 30 seconds, depending on the budget allotted).

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CHAPTER 28

Narration as a Source for Studies in Ethic Systems: an Historical, Psychological Perspective

Szymon Czerkawski

Abstract

This chapter approaches the narrative from the perspective of historical psychology. This discipline aims to apply psychological methods in aiding and facilitating the historical research process. Unfortunately, historical psychology lacks access to the usual psychological tools, such as experiments or standardised tests and questionnaires; because of that, it finds narrative sources invaluable in two ways. One can be referred to as the qualitative approach and involves analysing the story as a form of psychological interview. The other can be summarised as the quantitative approach. It concentrates on the devices and establishes their significance and interdependence by means of statistical analysis. These two approaches are complementary, as each provides different insights and data. This chapter focuses on the application of historical psychology in research of ethic systems. It is a part of a doctoral study, which analyses the influence ethics had on decision making among warrior clans in 14th century Japan, employing this novel approach. It concentrates on methodological aspects and starts with a brief summary of the research area. It then elaborates on the methods employed, discussing their characteristics, merits and flaws. Before finishing by addressing potential concerns regarding the shortcomings of available methods and how to remedy them.

Key Words

Methodology – history – psychology – narrative – ethics – Japan – warrior clans

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present how narrative can be approached from the perspective of historical psychology, particularly in regard to studies in ethic systems. Its basis is the theoretical and methodological foundations, as well as developments of my PhD dissertation project titled *Between Kyoto and Yoshino*: *the study of the Kikuchi, Kusunoki, Shimazu and Yamana clans during the Era of the Northern and Southern Courts* (*1333–1392*) that aims to analyse the influence ethics had on decision-making among warrior clans in 14th century. This chapter will concentrate on the methodological aspects. It will first give a brief outline of the research field and the methods employed, followed by an explanation of how they will be applied in the project proper. Finally, it will address potential concerns regarding the shortcomings of this approach, as well as potential solutions.

2 What is Historical Psychology?

The first question that needs to be answered is what do we understand under the term *historical psychology*. As the name implies, it is a science discipline combining psychology and history. It can be primarily understood as an applied science serving an auxiliary role to history and whose purpose is to provide explanations of historical events, phenomena and processes on the grounds of psychological theories (Dymkowski, 2003). In this aspect, historical psychology is related to cross-cultural psychology. If the latter can be understood as an "inter-cultural" comparison, the former would be an "intra-cultural" one. Historical psychology's other purpose is establishing the extent to which psychological theories can be applied to historical times. This chapter's focus will be on the *auxiliary science of history* aspect.

Approaches to historical psychology can be briefly described in terms of psychological theories from which they were derived. The first one would be the so-called "psychohistory", which is founded on Freud's psychoanalysis and its development by his successors. It primarily employs individual accounts and analyses them on grounds of the psychodynamic framework. The main drawback of this approach is the subjective nature of interpretations and unclear methodology. The analyses are often very speculative and attribute relevance to words and described events without objective justification. For those reasons such research attempts often provided dubious results.

The second approach can be described as eclectic, gradually leaning towards contemporary cognitive theories and discoveries. Starting with Zevedei

Barbu's *Problems of Historical Psychology* (Barbu, 1960) in the following decades several authors considered the possibility of employing psychological theories in historical research (for example: Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Guriewicz, 1968; Lewicki, 1975; Obuchowski, 1972; Pacewicz, 1985; Peeters, 1985). Particularly, this approach attempted to provide general characteristics, showing many similarities with another auxiliary science of history, prosopography. The latter is an investigation of the common characteristics of a historical group, whose individual biographies may be largely untraceable, by means of a collective study of their lives, in multiple career-line analysis. The difference is, however, significant – prosopography employs biographical facts as its data, whereas the cognitive approach attempts to interpret behaviour in the light of psychological theories.

After initial enthusiasm, researchers gradually identified a number of methodological problems due to which this field of study was mostly abandoned. Dymkowski (2003) sees the future of historical psychology in utilising the findings of cognitive psychology,[1] however this discipline has yet to develop any holistic theories that could provide a reliable basis for a general framework.

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The last approach is the cultural-historical psychology formed by Lev Vygotski and developed by his students and followers in the 1920s and 30s. Rooted in Marxism, it operated under the assumption that humanity had been progressing linearly and inevitably also in terms of mental functions. The conceptual framework of the cultural-historical school is therefore technically cross-cultural psychology rather than historical psychology per se, as best seen in Alexander Łuria's accounts of the changes in the cognitive framework of Central Asian peoples before and after collectivisation, where he observed a shift from concrete to abstract thinking (Dymkowski, 2003). While the data established within this approach had great significance, the underlying paradigm, especially the historical determinism, heavily constrained possible interpretations.

3 Developing a New Approach

As one can see, all of these approaches have significant drawbacks and cannot be used as a framework for future research in their entirety. For this reason, historical psychology failed to properly develop into a science in its own right. Those shortcomings led to developing a different, more eclectic solution. It is founded on the notion that can be derived from the cultural-historical school – that, historically speaking, every society has a corresponding level of cognitive development (understood as the average mental capabilities of its members), which we can place on a continuum ranging from exclusively concrete

and particular representations of terms on one side, to abstract and general on the other. Determining a particular group's position on this continuum would allow for establishing which psychological models and theories are potentially applicable in this group's case. In order to evaluate that key factor, this approach will rely on Lev Vygotsky (1989), one of the founders and most prominent members of the cultural-historical school and his theory regarding thought and speech.

It provides a theoretical justification to consider speech as a direct reflection of the speaker's thoughts and understanding of certain concepts. Since terms related to mentality and ethics are almost exclusively abstract, the bulk of their meaning is transmitted by means of social interaction, therefore allowing for analysing them not as particular cases, but as networks of interacting individuals. Vygotsky also regarded written speech as the most developed and multi-dimensional form of speech, as it is devoid of omissions that occur in internal speech and, to a lesser degree, in the normal speech, due to non-verbal cues. This notion is crucial for regarding written accounts as expressions of thought and enabling for them to be analysed as such.

4 Narratives: Reflections of Thought

This brings us to the use of narratives in the field of historical psychology. In this regard, they are indispensable, as they are the only sources for establishing the level of cognitive development. Historical psychologists do not enjoy the luxuries of their regular counterparts – they cannot conduct classic psychological experiments, carry out psychological tests, distribute questionnaires or conduct interviews. They are only presented with a written account without the possibility to ask follow-up questions. The content of the narrative may often have little or no relevance to the actual research topic and questions. There is also a probability that, depending on the circumstances, the narrator may, deliberately or not, not be telling the truth. Because of that, it is often the structure rather than the content that becomes the main focus of the study. Especially the term the speaker or writer employs, the way he or she supports his reasoning and describes the situation, the grammatical constructions that are used – all are indications of the level of cognitive development.

While these theoretical implications allow for more informed hypotheses, in the end they are no different than the works of the aforementioned psychohistorians and those of regular historians who employ intuitive psychological reasoning in their research. Historians are expected to rely on at least two independent sources which lends credibility to their findings. In the same way

psychologists are required to use at least two independent diagnostic methods in their evaluation. Historical psychologists, however, are both. While increasing the number of employed sources renders findings more reliable, they would still remain qualitative, idiographic approaches with all the drawbacks it entails. As an emerging science, historical psychology is forced to strive for greater, objective credibility that would allow for it to establish itself as an independent science with nomothetic capabilities, as well as to meet the psychological requirement of diversifying the evaluation methods. While available options are limited, an entire category of research tools is readily applicable – namely, linguistic and statistical analyses. Both have a long history within psychology, particularly in the areas of psycholinguistics and differential psychology.

In combining the richness and intricacy of qualitative case studies on one side and the credibility and generalisation capabilities of quantitative analyses on the other, there are promising prospects for the future of historical psychology.

5 Narrative, Psychology and Ethics

On the grounds of ethics, narrations can be approached twofold, depending on the nature of the object of study. The first approach concerns theoretical treaties and normative acts, such as laws, all of which can be considered a form of narrative. Generally belonging to the fields of philosophy, theology, or law, they tend to provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for what is permitted and prohibited but are by no means an accurate description of the corresponding reality, representing more of an ideal that is expected to be applied on a daily basis to the highest possible degree. The second approach pertains to all other narratives that convey some sort of information on the author's ethic beliefs. In this sense some theoretical works can be regarded as an expression of one's mind, but it is the personal writings that comprise the majority of source material. In both cases, albeit in different proportions, research is concentrated on tracing the reasoning behind ethical and moral claims and rules, as well as uncovering the understanding of the terms that carry ethic connotations.

Psychology also has a history of approaching ethics, or rather: moral reasoning. Those approaches initially started on the grounds of classical psychoanalysis, where *superego* was considered to be constraining the basic urges of *id*. It was, however, the cognitive approach that eventually dominated this area of study. It regards moral reasoning as a cognitive function of understanding social phenomena and the norms which regulate them, though the stance on the

exact relation between inherent inclinations and cultural influence – or rather which has more influence on the other – varies among different researchers (Aronfreed, 1968; Kohlberg, 1976; Gilligan, 1982; Haidt, 2001). Paradoxically, this dilemma is of secondary importance to this project – the resulting norms are always a product of social interactions of the individuals. (Bandura, 1986; Vygotsky, 1980). Since the scope of this research is clans, in other words: certain social networks, it is the narrative expressions of their collective reasoning, itself being a product of multitudes of interactions comprising the socialisation process, that will be the main research objects.

■ Reference Aronfreed (1968) is cited in the text but not provided in the reference list. Please check.

6 This Project

The theoretical framework for this project is derived from two main sources: Norbert Elias' figurational sociology and the aforementioned Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology theories. The first one will be underlying the entire dissertation and was chosen due to its compatibility with the research problem. Considering each clan as a figuration, i.e. an evolving network of interdependent individuals, woven into the fabric of the warrior class and, subsequently, the Japanese society, allows for employing the methodological and conceptual framework behind this theory. Moreover, due to its concentration on the processes and interactions, figurational sociology is very compatible with social psychology and, as an extension, with psychology as a whole. It will thus provide the means for distinguishing existing social figurations, such as families, peer groups, classes and other possibly significant networks, both vertical and horizontal. It is within these groups that all the aspects mentioned before will be subject to comparison.

The second theory will be predominantly employed in the second stage of the project, the one pertaining to self – and group-identity, ethics, as well as mentality and thoughts. Basing on Vygotsky's theses regarding the connection between thought and speech, with special attention given to written accounts, source documents and writings will be considered an expression of their authors' thought processes and associations. This assumption, derived from theory, will, as a result, allow the forming of hypotheses pertaining to the mental aspects of respective groups and individuals.

The primary method of research employed in this project will be an analysis of written sources specific for that period. Special attention will be given to personal and family documents, such as letters, diaries and family precepts, a selection of which will be chosen on the basis of their relevance to the topic. The research will focus on identifying key words and concepts associated with

ethics, which will then be subject to linguistic and psychological scrutiny in order to uncover their meaning, implications and significance for their users and the groups/networks of which they are members. The term "ethics" will be thus understood as a structured system of rules regulating conduct in relation to moral goodness. These goals will be achieved by primarily quantitative methods, like frequency lists, semantic field analysis and statistical analysis. The research procedure will therefore be a process resembling the one employed by the author in his unpublished master's thesis (Czerkawski, 2013). In order to uncover an even broader scope, whenever possible additional semantical and etymological analyses will be conducted. Qualitative methods will be employed as the last research step and in an auxiliary role, in order to limit the risk of projecting the author's own ideas and assumptions.

The results of these analyses are aimed at establishing *mental maps* of terms and concepts that were considered ethical, their importance in relation to one another, correlations and interconnections and possible underlying hidden factors revealed by factor analysis. These maps will be provided on a figurational (particular clans) and global (warrior society as a whole) levels. Subsequently they will be contrasted on an inter-figurational (between clans) level as well as, should the establishment of sufficient "maps" for particular characters and/or subgroups like generations or family branches prove successful, on intra-figurational (within the clan) and individual ones. This will create the necessary foundation for the descriptions of ethic frameworks of each relevant character or group.

Lastly, these theoretical models will be compared with confirmed historical activity, theory vs. practice, in order to assess the level of discrepancy between declared values and actual behaviour/undertaken actions. While providing a general overview of the degree of adherence to ethics, it will also make it possible to indirectly assess the importance of particular concepts, as the less crucial one will be more likely to be neglected and disregarded. As mentioned before, an auxiliary qualitative analysis of a well-grounded selection of sources will be aimed to provide a deeper understanding of key ethical concepts, as well as the mentality and reasoning of the characters in question. It will also serve as a control measure for the results of quantitative analyses.

In order to better illustrate the process, the following hypothesis will provide a good example. Among the four warrior clans researched in the project, two found themselves on each side of the dynastical conflict between the Northern and Southern Courts. Based on self-interest, all of them, even if not initially, should have eventually ended up in the same camp, which did not happen. Why did members of two clans make a decision against their material interests? The main hypothesis states that this was due to a different set

of values governing their conduct. One of the possible explanations is that the adherents of the Southern Court were among the close circles of the emperor preceding the conflict and their ethics were influenced by the Song Confucianism that was spreading among the emperor's supporters (Toyoda, 1966). Therefore, Confucian concepts like *ren* (benevolence, altruism), *chū* (loyalty) and *rei* (proper social behaviour, etiquette) should also be present, if not prominent, in their mental landscapes. Since they are intricate philosophical concepts, the likelihood of them appearing *explicite* in texts is very small.

In order to verify their presence, it is necessary to compile frequency lists of all words that could have ethical and moral connotations, separate for each clan and other possible analysed groups. These lists will then provide the terms that will be used in the next stage – semantical field analysis and factor analysis. If the initial hypothesis is correct, these analyses will reveal hidden factors which meaning will roughly correspond to that of the aforementioned Confucian concepts among the supporters of the Southern Court, whereas their adversaries will abide by a different hierarchy of values and concepts.

In order to confirm such a hypothesis, the next step will be a qualitative analysis of a selection of sources. By confronting the model revealed in the "mental" maps with the narratives and what they convey, as well as with actual historical conduct, it is hoped to achieve conclusive and consistent results that will support the postulated hypotheses.

The proposed method is not without shortcomings. The first and foremost one is the amount of data needed to produce reliable results. Due to the nature of the source material, it is limited to literate groups whose language we understand. The results of quantitative analyses may prove inconclusive and fail to provide guidelines for subsequent case studies. The new approach has therefore a limited scope and in some cases may provide absolutely no evidence. It does, however, have the potential to deliver solid data that could lead to new discoveries. I personally believe this is the path historical psychology should at least attempt to take.

7 Conclusion

As seen above, the narrative is the most basic and indispensable source material for any psychological historian, especially one who researches ethics and mentality. Aside from the obvious text analysis, the new approach proposed in this chapter takes a step further and attempts to expand on the ways a researcher can extract information and data from a narrative, by employing statistical and linguistic analysis methods. In doing so it aims to provide solid foundations to

research of mentality and ethics of historical groups. While its scope is currently limited and limitations significant, this method is also meant as a basis for future development via cooperation with other disciplines like history and its auxiliary sciences, cognitive psychology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, religion studies and philosophy in order to expand on its capabilities and turn historical psychology into a scientific discipline in its own right.

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CHAPTER 29

Reinstating Narrative: the Role of Stories in Claudio Magris's Post-postmodernist Historical Novels

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Remko Smid

Abstract

This research analyses the most recent novels of the Italian novelist Claudio Magris, *Blindly* (2005) and *Blameless* (2015) and their emphasis on the importance of stories. Narratives are everywhere in both novels. These works can be considered post-postmodernist historical novels: on the one hand they follow the postmodernist problematization of the possibilities of narrative to represent our world and history, resulting in fragmented, non-linear storylines, but at the same time the novels do not reject narrative either. Whereas postmodernism considered narrative a distortion of reality, *Blindly* and *Blameless* underline the importance of stories for making sense of the past. Magris' novels reinstate narrative as a means of understanding and as a determining factor of human experience, suggesting we cannot do without stories, even though the forms of storytelling have changed.

Key Words

Narrative – stories – fiction – history – historical novel – postmodernism – Magris – narrative turn – ethics – post-postmodernism

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1 Magris' Recent Novels

Claudio Magris is one of Italy's and Europe's most renowned writers and thinkers. He has written numerous novels, essays, theatrical texts and writes frequently for *Corriere della sera*. His most recent novels are *Alla cieca* (2003) (published in English as *Blindly*) and *Non luogo a procedere* (2015) (*Blameless*

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in English), which can be considered post-postmodernist novels for both the time of their publication and their characteristics. These post-postmodernist attributes are, most importantly, a return to more narrative-driven stories, an emphasis on narratives as crucial for human understanding and a more central position for ethical considerations.

Magris' recent works follow his earlier novels in their incorporation of true stories and/or figures. *Blindly*'s protagonist and narrator Salvatore is a fictional character but narrates several episodes from European history in which he played a part. He is a patient in a mental institution and narrates his life at request of his doctor. In this premise we see a striking parallel with another novel from Trieste, Italo Svevo's *Zeno's Conscience* (1923), whose narrator and protagonist also narrates episodes of his own life at the request of his psychiatrist. Salvatore was born in Australia in 1910, but emigrated to Trieste, Italy, his father's hometown. He became a member of the communist party, was an antifascist spy in Italy in the 1930's and participated in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. As a member of the communist resistance in WWII he was arrested by the Nazi's, who deported him to Dachau. He survived and returned to Trieste, where he continued to work for the party. In 1947 he was sent to Yugoslavia to help rebuild the country. But he was there at the wrong time: due to a conflict between Tito and Stalin all communists that did not renounce the Soviet leader were arrested and deported to concentration camps. Salvatore, deported for the second time in his life, was taken to the Adriatic island Goli Otok, where he was tortured and forced to work. He managed to escape, but on arrival in Trieste the party ordered him to keep quiet about his experiences. Salvatore complied, but lost his communist faith. When in 1991 the Soviet Union disintegrated, Salvatore lost his mind and was committed.

Blameless (Magris, 2015) is similarly based on true stories, but its protagonist actually existed as well. The main character is Diego de Henriquez, a collector of arms in Trieste. He built his collection of war material during and after WWII and planned to make a war museum. This museum was indeed built and can be visited today in Trieste. It is called "Civico museo della guerra per la pace Diego de Henriquez" (Museum of war for peace Diego de Henriquez). De Henriquez had stored thousands of objects in a warehouse, when in 1974 a fire destroyed part of the museum and killed de Henriquez.

His work was continued by Luisa Brooks, a fictional character who became curator of the museum. She was the daughter of a Jewish-Triestine woman and an Afro-American soldier. One of the novel's most central stories concerns the Risiera di San Sabba, an old rice factory that was turned into a concentration camp during WWII. The Nazi's and fascists used it mainly to transport prisoners further to the more well-known camps, but it did have a crematorium

and 3000 to 5000 people died there. De Henriquez copied the testimonials of the prisoners, which were written on the walls of the camp, in his notebooks. Part of these writings refer to the people responsible for the horrors; the actual killers, but also the individuals that were accomplices: Triestines who escaped punishment after the war and continued to live peacefully in the Triestine society.

These notebooks form a testimony of the repressed Triestine co-responsibility for the horrors, but were unfortunately destroyed in the fire. The novel's title can be translated as *pronouncement of acquittal*. It is a sentence handed down by the judge when there is not enough evidence to proceed with the trial. Indeed, the guilty individuals are never found by de Henriquez.

2 Problematizing Narrative

The reliance on true stories is not the only aspect both novels have in common. Resembling postmodernist historical novels, they also share an unconventional narrative structure. In this sense both works address the crisis of representation, and of storytelling, that has been the subject of literary and cultural debates during the 20th century. This crisis concerned the so-called communicability of experience: narrative was no longer considered the adequate form for expressing human experience in modern society. Several causes can be identified for this, among which the secularization, modernization and consequential complexification and fragmentation of society. Narratives (for instance that of the own identity) were no longer pre-given, but had to be increasingly constructed by the subject. This resulted in a growing awareness of the narratives' lack of foundations. The crisis of narrative was further deepened by the ensuing crisis of European humanism, which was especially present in the years after the Second World War. During that time narrative was seen as an ethically questionable imposition of order onto reality.

The literary experiments of the postwar decades expressed a sort of *new realism*, as the non-linear, fragmented literary form were seen as more successful in capturing the non-narrative experience of reality. This non-narrativity is also present in the last two novels of Magris. *Blindly* was in fact the first novel in which the Triestine writer constructed an unconventional narrative structure. Magris has stated he first attempted to write a linear novel, but that it did not work: one cannot write a straightforward story about the schizophrenic experience of the protagonist (Magris, 2012). Indeed, the narrative of *Blindly* does not contain any teleology, unity or closure. Its anachronistic narration forms one of its most striking characteristics. The narrator Salvatore is clearly

traumatized by his experiences and his traumatic memories flood in uncontrollably throughout his narration.

The jumps back and forward in time are plentiful. Narrative complexity is further enhanced by interference from other narratives. Salvatore alternates narration of his own life with that of the myth of Jason and the Argonauts and of the story of Jorgen Jorgensen, a historical figure. Jorgensen was a whale hunter, first king of Iceland and expedition leader to Australia, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th century. While the myth functions as an analogy for his own life, Salvatore actually thinks he is Jorgensen.

The anachronies and interferences have a disorienting effect on the reader, but Salvatore is disoriented as well. With the end of communism Salvatore not only realized that his sacrifices had been futile, but he also lost his direction in life and even his identity. This is reflected in the narrative. *Blindly* narrates episodes of the past, but is also a narrative of Salvatore's self. His narrative lacks the unity and coherence that one would expect to find in such a life story. The fragmentation of the narrative therefore reflects that of the self. But our narrator sees the lack of direction, unity and meaning as characteristics of the present age, of the postmodern world. His existential issues would thus be societal ones as well. Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) famously described mistrust towards metanarratives as the primary postmodern characteristic. This is what comes to mind in Salvatore's narration: he has lost the communist Grand Narrative and is left with fragments, labyrinthic micronarratives. Salvatore does not experience history not as linear anymore: "history is not linear my friend. It zigzags" (Magris, 2005, p. 66, my translation). Furthermore, our narrator mentions the present is a time in which "we cannot give meaning to the world anymore", in which there only interpretations, but no truth. Moreover, there is no path towards the future: Salvatore mentions on several occasions that we have lost sight of the horizon and the "sun of the future". Our narrator has become aware of history as a narrative construction that cannot offer a definitive meaning. *Blindly* suggests a conventional narrative cannot express the contemporary experience of the world, which is characterized by disorientation, fragmentation and uncertainty.

Magris' new novel *Blameless* does not revolve as clearly around the protagonist's existential problems as *Blindly* does. It does, however, follow its predecessor in its episodic, anachronistic and fragmented narration. The division in chapters largely parallels the division of the material over the different rooms in the war museum. Some chapters begin with the notes of de Henriquez on the material in the room in question and proceed with a connected story. Other chapters narrate the story of Luisa and her family, going back centuries into Jewish and African history. The novel thus jumps back and forth in time,

albeit not as frantically as *Blindly* does. Whereas in *Blindly* different voices are expressed by the same person, in *Blameless* there are several narrators (Diego, Luisa and an external narrator that is not part of the story). Different voices tell different histories. *Blameless*' episodic narration suggests history is equally episodic, that there is no teleology and unity in the past, or in the stories about the past. Like *Blindly*, Magris' last novel tells us history is constituted by subjective, individual stories.

There are no Grand Narrative or Great History, but a myriad of micronarratives, of microhistories. Indeed, both novels refer to histories and experiences that made people warier of Grand Narratives. Both works thus appear to subscribe the non-narrative ethos typical typically found in experimental novels of the postwar decades.

3 Reinstating Narrative

During the so-called narrative turn, a shift occurred from the crisis of representation to the re-thinking of narrative as a form of imagination and knowledge. An increasing awareness of the importance of narrative for the human experience developed, wherein people accepted a narrative interpretation of reality and recognized narrative as a crucial form of sense-making. We now think humans need narrative, relating their own experience to cultural narratives. This recognition is also expressed in post-postmodernist novels, although their reinstating of narrative does not mean a mere return to 19th-century realism. Postmodern awareness of the limits of narratives is rather combined with the realization of narrative as inherent to human experience. We also encounter this seemingly paradoxical co-presence of problematizing and reinstating narrative in *Blindly* and *Blameless*.

Although Salvatore's own narrative is marked by discontinuity, fragmentation and disorientation, he relies on narratives. The myth of Jason and the Argonauts is the archetypical narrative that forms the deep structure of *Blindly*. Salvatore identifies with Jason and sees many corresponding elements between his and Jason's story. Jason was in search of the golden fleece, but brought death and destruction to Colchis. Salvatore was a devout communist, convinced of fighting for a good cause, but he also brought violence to the places he went. Even the names are similar: *Jason* originally means *he who cures*, while *Salvatore* is Italian for he who *salvages*. Salvatore (and with him the reader) is attempting to understand his own experiences through narration of the myth. Narratives are, after all, a form of thinking, interpreting and dealing with human experiences, including existential questions.

The other interfering narrative in Salvatore's narration of his life is a historical one. The reliance on this narrative for understanding and creating meaning is a subconscious process. After all, Salvatore does not know he and Jorgensen are two different individuals. Just as in the case with Jason, Jorgensen's life has many elements in common with Salvatore's. Both men were sent abroad, both men were accused of espionage and both were deported and imprisoned in camps (Jorgensen in Tasmania). Although the interferences of the Jorgensen's story are disorienting for the reader, for Salvatore there is no discontinuity. For him it is just another episode from the same life. The reliance on both myth and previous history indicates similar stories can be found throughout history and even pre-history, giving history in a sense a cyclical quality. This aspect provides a sense of unity to both history in general and *Blindly*'s narration in particular.

The importance of narratives is also emphasized through the frequent instances of intertextuality, explicit and implicit references to other texts, in both *Blindly* and *Blameless*. In the former there are references to not only Jason's myth, but also to the Bible, *Pinocchio*, *Moby Dick* and *Heart of Darkness*. *Blameless* also refers to many different texts: local newspapers, the Torah, the Bible, the *Odyssey*, *Pinocchio*, the Japanese legend of Urashima, Sun Tzu, works of (military) history and popular Triestine songs. The cases of intertextuality do not just highlight the textual nature of our reality, as the postmodern approach of intertextuality suggests that reality can only be known through other texts. Indeed, intertextuality can also be read as an indication of the importance of narratives in our lives and of their determination of our experience. It can highlight our reliance on narrative to both understand and construct the world around us. This view of intertextuality is called *dialogical intertextuality* (Meretoja, 2014, p. 132).

Although *Blameless* may refer to even more stories than *Blindly*, it is not nearly as disorienting for the reader. Most jumps in time occur between the chapters, not within them. Moreover, coherence is created between the narrative voices, which seem to complement each other. Indeed, the different voices in the novel form a collective past, which is especially clear in the narrations of Diego de Henriquez and Luisa. The former narrates about the material he collected, but above all about the Risiera di San Saba, the Triestine concentration camp. The latter narrates the family past, including what happened to Triestine Jews. One narrative is formed out of the various voices, albeit not a linear one.

Furthermore, like *Blindly* did before, *Blameless* also underlines the importance of narratives for human understanding of the world and his/her experience. This is especially the case in the chapters narrated by Luisa, which

contain elements of family history, Jewish history, African history, legends and myths. Through these narratives Luisa attempts to interpret and understand what happened to her family and who she is. There are biblical references in her narration that function within the framework of the Jewish or African history. These two histories are often associated with one another by Luisa, particularly through reference to their common experience of oppression, exile and the search for a home. Both legacies are formulated in mythical terms, turning their condition into an a-historical, universal one. The face of Luisa's father, for instance, shows traces of centuries, even millennia of history:

> the father's face expressed an even deeper and ancient sadness; a history of slavery in Egypt and Babylonian cruelty, of Galuth, of exile, going back to remote times and extending to spaces as vast as those over which the sons of Israel were scattered
>
> MAGRIS, 2015, p. 145. My translation.

Time and space are also condensed in a fragment that similarly connects Jewish and Afr(o-Amer)ican experiences:

> The Lord has made us leave Ur in order to give us the earth, the Promised Land of tomorrow, when the wolf and the lamb will graze together; until that day land of blood, guilt and pain [...] Slavery of Egypt and cruelty of Babylon, destruction of time and flight in all directions, pogroms in Galicia and lynching in Alabama, slave trade and the Shoah. My father has arrived here to stop them from killing my mother; ritual killings and rape of white women, the ancient snake is liar, but is the most accredited testimony and all believe him, the Jews kill children for Easter and the blacks rape white women
>
> MAGRIS, 2015, p. 170.

This fragment refers to ancient history (Ur, Babylon, Egypt), colonization (African slave trade) and recent history (pogroms, lynching, Shoah). Moreover, it, again, connects the experience of both Jews and Africans to one another: their perennial victimhood, the search for the Promised Land, slavery, violence and defamation. Biblical and mythological narratives are *Ur-stories*, models for the interpretation of later, historical narratives. Luisa, the subject, is the one who connects the history of her people to biblical and mythical stories. She understands her experience as a Jewish and black woman through her reliance on the historical narratives, but her own experience becomes part of them as well. Salvatore in *Blindly* also relies on other narratives, but these cannot provide

him a stable existential basis anymore. Luisa, on the other hand, does succeed in constructing her identity by drawing on other narratives. *Blindly* problematizes the possibilities of narrative to reflect the past and our experience, and the validity of Grand Narratives, but it does not discredit narrative either. It may be true that the traditional linear narrative cannot capture our experience of the world anymore, yet narrative is still needed. It is a primary mode of constructing meaning and understanding, even in a world as fragmented as the contemporary western one.

The turn (back) to narrative is accompanied in post-postmodernist novels by a return to ethics. These explicit ethical preoccupations distinguish these works of fiction from their postmodernist predecessors. Ethics are all over *Blindly* and *Blameless* as well, especially regarding the ethics of remembering. Both novels propagate the narration of small, individual stories that easily constitute unknown, ignored episodes of the past. Especially in *Blameless* the own national historical guilt is emphasized, suggesting the importance of accepting responsibility for own wrongdoings. This presence of ethics also raises the question on the connection between narrative and ethics in general. Stories are an extremely suitable form for conveying ethics, as they are constantly influenced by the forces of order and disorder, integrity and chaos, and, indeed, good and evil. Both of Magris' novels, however, are more clearly concerned with the ethical problems of narratives themselves. Not so much the use of narratives for meaning-making and interpretation is problematic, but the reification of these narratives is.

We need to remember that the narratives we use are just constructions, instead of propagating the own cultural narratives as natural and claiming to possess truth. Both *Blindly* and *Blameless* deal with those histories in which ideological movements (Nazism, fascism, communism) have done precisely this. This awareness of the constructed nature of narratives creates, however, (at least in *Blindly*) existential problems. In fact, *Blindly* suggests that awareness of narratives coincides with the end of their functionality. The consideration of own narratives as natural means being unconscious of their status as constructions. Existential needs and ethical considerations would thus be in conflict with each other.

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CHAPTER 30

"I so Regret the Barograph…" As We Make and Use Objects, so They Form and Mould Us

Prue Bramwell-Davis

Abstract

Personal development is explored in the context of arts-based academic research using concepts from Storytelling to focus on what can be learned through the skilled work and intelligence of the hands. Storytelling, as one of the methodologies of Narrative Inquiry, provides a variety of conceptual frameworks, for example the essential dimension of a trouble, linking design-based thinking with wider social science research themes, as working through problems involves the refined use of value judgments. In the phenomenological world the intelligent and skilful use of the hands also forms a bridge which enables us to understand and explore our relationships with the artefacts and environments that form us, and to experience the object world in terms of prosthetic tools for living. This chapter explores storytelling about three objects in my family history, a barograph, an embroidered bag, and a hand mirror. I have foregrounded the use of the hands in this exploration, and it has enabled me to use such experiential learning to show how my hands, and thinking about the work of other's hands has revealed stories that might otherwise remain hidden. Reflection on what was discovered enabled me to use the experiences for my own personal development.

Key Words

Hand-skills – hand work – intelligent hands – embodied cognition – storytelling – phenomenology – experiential learning – personal development

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This chapter explores connections between three themes: art and design-based research, the ways we understand artefacts in our lives in the form of

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stories, and how the work of the hands in making and using objects creates unique ways of knowing and learning. As a designer-maker myself, and in my work with textiles-based research students at the Royal College of Art I saw that theory and practice were interlocked through a continuous process of making things and making discoveries. When used in an academic framework of doctoral research, this iterative spiral (Kolb & Fry, 1975) has to be explored and developed beyond the traditional practices of the craftsperson-maker. It must bring into active and critical consideration a range of different contexts of the work, connecting to and involving many different disciplines. One of these is the emerging practice of Storytelling as part of Narrative Inquiry.

Made things are part of who we are in the phenomenological world, seamlessly connecting with us and with each other through a multitude of interactions and systems of relationship. Artefacts and environments that we come into contact with and use are continuously the carriers of ideas, feelings and opinions, always classifications. This rich mycelium communicates through stories we tell ourselves and others, and becomes part of how we understand ourselves and the world we inhabit. Storytelling thus becomes a powerful research tool, both for design development, and for social sciences.

I want to explore how reminiscing about objects in our lives reveals and nurtures their meanings, and how such "transactions" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) can reflect back to us as opportunities for learning. These interactions inevitably exploit all the senses but there is one player which has until recently remained largely unacknowledged, and this is the role played by the hands. Our haptic sense of touch is made more active through the intelligent use of our hands, and I want to bring attention to them because using and working with the hands can bring us into focus on the here and now of attention, and this is the site of experiential learning.

Sometimes the hands use tools, and sometimes they are tools in their own right. In this way we can see them as providing an intelligent bridge or connection between us and the object or spatial world we are part of. We can then understand the things around us in terms of tools for living, prosthetics for our senses and our minds as we interact with them to make the world, and to make sense of it. When we share our skin with that of an object, it talks back to us through the ways that hands interact with it, in explicit and tacit ways. Depending on skill and attention there can be a rich conversation, variously confirming, or revealing and questioning. Stories envelop objects and then these are projected out into the world. As time passes, things are understood in new ways, the conversations change, and reflection can lead us to what may have changed in ourselves.

This takes place in the context of a contrary trend, which has meant that in an increasingly passive consumption-oriented and visual culture we may be in danger of losing the connection between the skill of the hands and making sense of the world around us, let alone with hand-making. Although hands are developing certain specialised skills of interaction with screen-based media, more general dexterities may fall by the wayside, and then we become more out of touch, literally, with our environments. The entirely false cultural division between hand and head goes back to the much-reviled separation between vocational and academic training and education. The epithet 'manual' generally has negative connotations. Since the Enlightenment our culture has been built on the supposed superiority of the world of abstract ideas and thinking, compared to the embodied cognition of what is experienced, known and then conceptualised through connection to the physical world (Bramwell-Davis, 2015).

Comprehension of the world starts with the grasping efforts of the young baby. Prehension or the reach/touch process of discovery is closely followed up by what the eyes might be able to decipher. The importance of the hands is preserved in many telling metaphors we take for granted, for example: *being in touch*, *losing touch* with someone or something, getting back in *touch*; or something being a bit of a *touchy* subject, clearly showing the seamless connection between emotional and physical experience. *Holding onto* and being able to *let go* migrates from early physical experiences to a structural aspect of our conceptual and emotional learning and development. We talk of ideas *within our grasp*, which hints at modes of thinking that do not go via words, but points to a more spatial and sensory mode of intelligence. At the hairdresser I notice that Jackie deliberately looks away as her fingers pinch the hair ends either side of my head to gauge if the cut is level.

Paying attention to the work of the hands takes the researcher directly to the recognition of different ways of knowing, that knowledge itself is ways of thinking about the world. While Bruner (1986) observes how narrative ways of knowing focus on lived experience, Sennett, in his research about how craftspeople work, notes that they represent "the special condition of being *engaged*" (2008, p. 20; his emphasis).

Storytelling is the life-blood of Narrative Inquiry, and an essential feature of a story is a *trouble* (Bruner, 1990; Frank, 1995). Troubles infuse design and crafts explorations and problem finding and solving, as they do the evaluation of styles of research and its perceived validity, as well as the content of social science research, because they all involve the sophisticated use of the skills of making value judgments. In this case, however, I am diving into my

troubles with my own family history. Noting the role of artefacts in defining and reminding us of who we are, I want to challenge my need or desire to keep certain objects in my life to talk back to me about who I am. Perhaps, instead, using the intelligence of the hands as tools for radical learning, I can make new discoveries about how these relationships have changed, and storytell these loved artefacts sufficiently well into my sense of self right now, that I can set them adrift to populate other people's lives, other people's worlds.

I have focussed on three objects: a barograph, an embroidered bag, and a hand mirror. The barograph demonstrates how tool-using is a way to engage more fully with the physical world; through simple but regular interaction connections can be made that are not available to abstract thinking, or unaugmented sensory perception. With the second object, an embroidered cloth bag, I can focus on something entirely hand-crafted, and describe how careful exploration with the fingers can go beyond the surface and reveal evidence of otherwise hidden stories. The third object shows how the hands can take us out of our skins. All three descriptions connect to knowledge-making, and thus research thinking, both metaphorically or literally, and so go some way to restoring the hands to their proper place of articulating the world.

While disposing of things after the death of my mother, I sold the barograph, before I was emotionally ready to part with what was part heirloom, part piece of magic from childhood days, and this feeling lent itself to the title of this paper.

This 19th century barograph had been owned by my great-uncle, a well-to-do farmer in the early years of the 20th century. It might typically have been found as part of the furnishings of any prosperous Victorian home. It measures and graphically represents changes in air pressure or weight over time, bringing into the domestic sphere, via the rarified world of precision-engineered measurement, the unseen natural forces determining what we call *weather*. The device extends our lived-in environment, our comprehension of the physical world. The vastness and complexity of the natural workings of the planet's atmosphere are concentrated into the table-top neatness of this glass enclosed box.

On the floor of the box is a stack of metal containers called aneroids containing an air vacuum. They have elastic lids which deflect according to the ambient air pressure inside. A spring amplifies these minute movements, which are transferred to a metal arm. At the far end of the arm an inked scriber touches a sheet of paper marked in time intervals and units of air pressure. The paper is wound round a rotating drum driven by clockwork. Thus, the scriber traces on the paper changes in air pressure as time passes.

■ Figure 31.1 has been changed as 30.1 for correctness, please check.

FIGURE 30.1
19th century barograph

Apart from glancing at the wavering line as one passes by, there is the far more intense weekly task of changing the paper, filling the inkwell, and winding the mechanism. For as long as this takes, and it requires steady hands, the minder and the barograph are in an intimate relationship, entirely dependent on skilful use of fingers and hands. This needs to take place in a dedicated and calm frame of mind: the replacement of the chart with its trace of last week's weather, its highs and lows perhaps to be the subject of conversation over tea later in the day, certainly more substantial consideration of the implications for the farming round, and thus a tool for extending economic control over the environment. The careful winding of the drum with a delicate key, otherwise safely stored in a drawer below the mechanism. The fingers working with focussed attention on putting one drop of the glutinous metallic purple ink from a tiny bottle into the minute well behind the scriber, then engaging it gently with the new paper surface at the correct place. Finally the replacement of the glass cover.

Hand and eye form a bridge of abstract concepts and tacit sensory experience across to the otherwise imperceptible machinations of the planet, and bring them into the domestic realm, countering in a small way what Pallasmaa, in *The Thinking Hand* (2009), has noticed as many people's loss of a sense of place in the natural world, and our close dependence on it. I see the barograph as a very special kind of prosthetic device, locked into a particular era. Sophisticated mechanical processes had been made visual and brought into the domestic sphere, replacing for those affluent enough to afford one, what was beforehand a more analogue way of knowing, much reliant on folklore and observation of some readily perceived signs in the natural world.

As a young person in the 1960's I had learned about how the barograph worked from watching my father's Sunday ritual tending it, as regular a practice

as going to church. On reflection I realise now that the process was probably more important to my father as a connection to his uncle, his replacement father, than any amount of weather reading and prediction, by then broadcast on the radio and television. Years later I had to weigh up different aspects of keeping the barograph, or not. It was an intriguing object, and a magic tool. I saw that I did not want to be tied to the ritual of tending it each week. I was conscious of being caught in different kinds of time span, the work of the hands in an endless chain of present moments of slow attention repeated down the years from generation to generation, now a hollowed-out and no longer relevant ritual. I realised I inhabit a world where I am aware or am easily informed of the weather patterns of the whole globe, at the touch of button.

Unworking, the device had a forlorn air, especially the metaphorically and literally thick vertical line, left by the scriber tracing over itself on the paper of the drum drawn to a halt as there was no one left who cared to wind it up. The lack of interaction with the dear object rendered it something for empty display or historical curiosity, and I let it go. Even so I wasn't sure something important might not have been sacrificed as I 'moved on', and shed the thing. I seem to have become smaller, more digital, while that image of weather information was a better way to make the bridge to the physical, even transcendental world of nature, where I prefer to dwell.

The second object is an embroidered bag, typically for containing a knitting or sewing project. I found it in my mother's house in a chest of drawers that wasn't often visited. It was full of things that had long ago stopped being part of her life; she had moved on and they had stayed behind. I vaguely remembered the bag from many years before. My childhood eye had been drawn to the picture of the little house under the great flowering tree, as though it was in a story. Whose home was that? All I knew was that my mother had got the bag in Jamaica, which was in 1938, when she went to visit her sister who was working there.

FIGURE 30.2
Embroidered bag

Now I looked at it as a piece of textile craft work, my maker's eye and hands exploring its materials and techniques, how beautifully it was put together, the state it was in. It is hard to classify in terms of style, like many vernacular objects. The fabric is a dense thick cotton, and the bag is lined with a pretty lightweight fabric of flowers and leaves in pinks and greens that bears no relation stylistically to the imagery of the bag's outside. The side seams don't go all the way to the top so there is a big mouth to the bag. At the top of the front and back panels flat sticks of wood are enclosed in the fabric, to make the opening easier to use.

The assembly of the two fabrics and the enclosing of the wooden battens has been beautifully executed by hand, hardly a stitch to be seen. The embroidery is bold and assured, done with 6-strand mercerised cotton whose colour hasn't lost any of its vibrancy in its 70-year life. Here and there I can see a faint line trace in pale blue on the fabric, the design for the embroiderer to follow. This is slow deliberate work, the careful placement of the needle to make the stitches lie well on the fabric even if the pattern is already given. Hidden here is the satisfaction of hand-work well done, of craft. I think of the craft of writing; we are usually given some kind of pattern to follow, but we still have to have focussed attention, feedback from attention to detail and close reading in order to develop any kind of real skill.

The French knots of the flame tree's blossom stand out from the surface. I can imagine the embroiderer inserting the loaded needle as close as possible and yet in a realistic relationship to the already made knots. This brings to mind what the designer craftsman David Pye (1978) saw as the fine line between what he called the workmanship of risk and workmanship of certainty. He observes that many hand-tools can be self-jigging, the work of the hand being partly guided by the previous encounter of the tool with its working surface, a groove in a piece of wood, the placing of a profusion of embroidered stitches, in contrast to the standout-ness of a completely new mark. How readily this physical reality translates into a metaphor for thinking and writing, following the groove of unquestioned assumptions, or guiding the tool to break new ground.

The style of the sewing emphasises the richness of the blossoms. Even if their real-life feathery qualities are lost, the idea of profusion is completely successful. The knots are perfectly done. This is a very skilled seamstress and I am assuming it is a woman. The tree's spreading design, going to each edge of the bag makes the image joyous, mythic almost when compared to the little hut sheltering below. Again, I return to the idea it is someone's home. The red door links it to the tree; I feel the tree's exuberance is the dream of the dweller inside.

Then I switch modes of enquiry and notice with my fingers that the blossom which is cut off by the left-hand edge of the bag in fact continues inside the seam. This means there was a mismatch between the size of the bag fabric, and the length of the wooden battens – they are not the right length for the width of the bag if all the design is to be seen. How did this happen? Why did the length of the two pieces of wood win out over the integrity of the picture of the tree? This bag feels home-made, and I sense an argument between the maker of the battens and the maker of the picture in the realisation of the project. A husband and wife perhaps? I am aware I may be projecting some assumptions into this scenario. My mother had been a keen seamstress herself. The endless fine work she produced in the early years of her marriage had made me wonder if that was evidence of her loneliness, or was it more the very deep satisfaction that comes with quiet engagement in detailed hand-work, well done. After all it is what I like about that kind of work. Although it is rarely acknowledged, almost always our hands work collaboratively, their seamless cooperation an extraordinary example of flexible teamwork. Good to remember that both models can coexist.

One might think that a simple embroidery picture made by following some lines on a piece of fabric does not have as much worth as some image originated by the embroiderer, as it is not *creative*. This common way of thinking has meant that the kinds of knowledge embodied in the processes of hand-making have largely been unacknowledged and uncharted until recently. Now there is a growing culture of researcher-makers in the arts who are exploring what kinds of knowledge are embodied in such a holistic set of mental and sensory processes, including the haptic. At the centre of such embodied cognition is experiential knowing in the present moment which comes from combining feedback from the senses of hand and eye, with tacit skill and knowledge from prior work.

Massive out-of-town emporia full of materials and kits for crafting, with minimum skills, any kind of decorative artefact to tempt and to soothe, show that there is some kind of enthusiasm for making things, which involves working with the hands. What I like about what I see there is a separation of making from the judgemental sledgehammers of the criteria for creativity. Hand-skills are engaged, and what is freed up is a kind of satisfaction in the fruits of workmanship, however minimal, achieved through doing focussed work, moment by moment. As Dissanayake (1995, p. 40) points out *hand-crafted* and *handmade* are terms now used in branding descriptions to indicate something special, beyond the ordinary things that are meant to define who we are, and yet the inclusion of the hand takes us back to who we really are. She says: "While

appreciating industrially produced things we long for a natural way". She introduces the idea of *joie de faire*, joy in making, to complement *joie de vivre*.

My third object is a hand-held mirror from my mother's trousseau. When I was a teenager I didn't like this mirror or what I thought it meant. I was trying to work out my own approach to my appearance, which at that time was about avoiding artifice. I didn't see the part of it that was fun, I was too taken up with an awareness that around me there was a front story that wasn't the same as what was going on behind. I didn't realise that that was life. Now I like the mirror for its style, and I've noticed how its use creates metaphorical links to conceptions of knowledge. In this story the hands are again intelligent extensions of the body, enabling us to move outside the confines of our skin, extending our sense of self, but in this case without needing to be very clever.

The mirror is elegantly designed in the Art Deco style of the bold and angular furniture and skyscrapers of the 1930's and 1940's America, where my mother got married. It's about being modern, and it's about glamour, which is fitting because before the war she had been a successful actress in London. The mirror's gilded surface is beginning to wear away, but on the back her new initials, surrounded by intricate chasing work in the metal, still makes the surface glisten in the light. The mirrored glass is bevelled, following the faceting at the corners of the frame itself. I see and feel some slight unevenness of the bevelling, revealing that this part of making the mirror has been done by hand, fitting the form of the glass to its frame. Somewhere in that towering environment of industrialised modernity, craftsmen are still doing their painstaking work.

The proportions are stylistically good, though in fact it's quite awkward to hold, very top heavy. The wrist has to come into play as one moves the mirror around to catch a view of the back of one's head, one's profile, with the use of

FIGURE 30.3
Hand-held mirror from my mother's trousseau

another, fixed mirror – then probably set on a dressing table, nowadays more likely the bathroom cabinet. It's an example of the non-dominant hand having a real job to do. The movement of the mirror away and around the body reminds me again that our sense of self, our identity, doesn't end with our skin, but extends into the space around us, our arms articulating that space. Our hands on their own, or with extensions, whether fans or swords, enable us to take ownership in and beyond the space around us. As my hand waves the mirror around rather aimlessly, I immediately become aware that it forms a moving frame, selecting parts of my surroundings to show me. The metaphor could not be stronger. It is readable as ideas about fields of knowledge, as well as how we try out understandings of the world we perceive ourselves to inhabit.

Translated to self-initiated academic research design for designer-makers, we start by thinking about what fields of knowledge may be involved, and what are their relationships with each other, and with our own ideas and practice. We define and redefine our project beyond its original boundaries. We try out frames that do and don't include ourselves, and we eventually fix on a story that makes the best of what we have found.

In these three stories I have foregrounded attention onto the role and behaviour of the hands in interrogating, serving and enjoying three very different artefacts. Through this exploration I have been able to learn new things about myself, partly because I experienced these objects in terms of my family history, and partly because I related to them as a designer maker, connected to other genealogies. In that tension I found the power of storytelling, and realised again that our hands provide a gateway into other ways of knowing if we can just reach out to grasp them.

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CONCLUSION

Looking towards the Future and Continuing the Conversations

■ Please check the edit made in the running title.

Tracy Ann Hayes, Theresa Edlmann and Laurinda Brown

How to conclude such a colourful book comprising an eclectic mix of perspectives on storytelling? Where to start? Where to end? What should come in between? Time has passed since we met in Oxford. We have all moved on in different directions, doing different work in different places. The work of bringing this book together has helped us to stay connected, with conversations by email, phone and Skype maintaining the bonds of friendship and collaboration that formed in Oxford in July 2016. As we write the final words, almost exactly two years later, we find ourselves reflecting on our experience of collaborating to present this global perspective on storytelling, from so many diverse perspectives, as a coherent and cohesive whole.

It has not been easy working with so many authors (and editors) scattered across the globe; however, it has been rewarding. It seems only fitting for us to bring things to a close with a story that encapsulates this shared experience. As promised in the introduction to part six, we are going to revisit the wise words of Prue Bramwell-Davis. These words provide a wonderful first line for a collaborative story, which we build using fragments from each of the chapters, working sequentially backwards through the book to return to the opening chapter. Each paragraph represents a part, starting with part 6 and ending with a one sentence paragraph from the introduction to the book:

> As time passes, things are seen in new ways, the conversations change and reflection can lead us to what may have changed in ourselves. The jumps back and forward in time are plentiful. Narrative complexity is further enhanced by interference from other narratives … it is the narrative expressions of their collective reasoning, itself being a product of multitudes of interactions comprising the socialisation process. Telling stories should not be seen as a simple action of creative communication, but as a form of knowledge and experience. What will we have to say to each other? What narrative arc could emerge?

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This interactive, shared approach should not be rushed, it needs to be considerate and supportive … a story can be told only in relation to stories of others … The stories I told myself, and those that were told to me, are not always enough to stave off haunting regret … Telling and listening to stories, in whatever form, is really what life is all about. Our stories are the building blocks of our lives. Through them we connect with other people, deepen our self-understanding and help to heal others and ourselves.

What emerges is a new, evolving literacy in response to emerging storytelling technologies. It was clear that many people had not shared with their children or grandchildren their experiences of growing up with inter-communality, friendship and cooperation. Tending the trees of the 'enemy' was not her responsibility but she still carried that guilt with her, more than forty years later. When can one culture's wisdom story be told by another? The young Maasai man visiting a hundred hotels … in search of the city girl whose number he lost … finding her in the middle of nowhere while looking for a giraffe … an African and a universal story of loss, love and hope. [She] composes and sings this song, incorporating [his] own hurtful words and responding to them by transforming them.

Want[ing] to escape from the misery and confusion … by 'being dead for a while', rather than wanting to end it altogether, it has evolved into a living narrative, an animal that grows and changes and takes on its own power and agency the longer I have it … [a]nd with each telling I get closer to making my own peace with it. We had learnt the power of sharing our story and how it really could make a difference. [S]tories of dissent or transgression are often rendered invisible; [t]he agent employed in this process is silence. [T]he relationships between the past and present work on a number of thresholds … like the edges of a folded piece of fabric: depending on the light … there are any number of ways of understanding what people are dealing with.

Everything interacts as the parts of a whole as the situation changes every moment. [I]nclude all activities that emphasise the active role of the learner in creating knowledge … research; brainstorming; developing the concept; writing a script; developing a storyboard; finding images or creating a video; editing; and publishing and screening the movie … of various digital storytelling types, such as, personal narratives; urban legends; informative stories; narratives examining historical; ethnographic; or religious events.

Storytelling is a valuable research tool to understand subjective aspects … especially useful to understand subjective impressions, motivation,

> unknown and unspeakable aspects … every listener would attempt to make sense of the stories in their own way. When I was a child, I played with words … that moment of discovery of what writing meant and what it could do. When it is my own stories I am talking about, I describe the experience in detail, including emotions and sensations. Character. Scene. Dialogue. Setting. The novelist's tools are the building-blocks of vivid, riveting storytelling.
>
> We make sense of our lives by telling stories about them; and we learn about other people by listening to the stories they tell.

The close of this story returns us to the start of the book in a manner that we hope will spark many more conversations and collaborations over the coming years. A story never truly ends as long as there are people to re-tell it …